THE PURE ESSENCE OF THE MIND

The Ancient Dzogchen Tradition of Tibet

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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Acknowledgments Invocation to Tapihritsa Brief Introduction

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. THE DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS

- **CHAPTER 1:** What is Dzogchen?
- **CHAPTER 2:** Attitude toward the Teachings and toward the Master
    - Listen, Reflect, Meditate, Experience, and Dissolve

II. THE MIND

- **CHAPTER 3:** The Changing Mind, the Grasping Mind
- **CHAPTER 4:** Remaining in Calm: Zhiné
    - How to Free Ourselves from the Limitations of the Mind
    - Calming the Body, Speech, and Mind
    - Three Levels of Remaining in Calm
- **CHAPTER 5:** The Limited Perspective and the Unlimited Perspective (Dzogchen)
- **CHAPTER 6:** Meditation
    - Three Systems of Meditation
- **CHAPTER 7:** Obstacles
    - Obstacles of Perspective

    - Obstacles Arising During Meditation
    - Obstacles Arising in Behavior
- **CHAPTER 8:** The Changing Mind and the Natural Mind
    - Kunzhi, Rigpa, and Lo
    - Discovering the Nature of the Mind
    - The Nature of the Mind and the Sound of Seed Syllables
- **CHAPTER 9:** The Search for the Nature of the Mind
    - Nine Ways to Recognize the Natural Mind
    - Three Methods of Observing the Nature of the Mind

III. SPACE, OPENNESS-LIGHT, CLARITY

- **CHAPTER 10:** Introduction to Space
    - The Space That Remains and Permeates, the Space That Moves, and the Space That Arises
- **CHAPTER 11:** The Experience of the Three Layas in the Three Spaces
    - Unification of the Three Spaces
- **CHAPTER 12:** Light—Luminosity—Clarity
    - Introduction to Light
    - Awakened Consciousness
- **CHAPTER 13:** Unification of the Three Spaces and the Three Lights
    - Trekchöd and Tògal
    - Connection with Oneself
    - Unique Taste

IV. EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN DZOGCHEN

- **CHAPTER 14:** Expectations in Dzogchen
- **CHAPTER 15:** Experiences in Dzogchen

V. THE FOUR EXCELLENCES

- **CHAPTER 16:** The Four Excellences
    - The Four Excellences (Spanish Translation)
    - **First Excellence:** Perspective
    - **Second Excellence:** Meditation
    - **Third Excellence:** Behavior
    - **Fourth Excellence:** Result

Conclusion
Appendix

Guru Yoga
Glossary

This book is a compilation of the Dzogchen teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche over several years in various parts of Mexico. We have translated and edited his talks, and from these, we have produced this book.

Ester Latorre Enbiz

Amalia Gómez Gómez Beatriz Álvarez Klein

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Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

INVOCATION TO TAPIHRITSA

... (Nangzher Lodpo sang the following invocation to his master Tapihritsa*)

E MA HO!

How wonderful!

You are the emanation of the heart of Kuntu Zangpo*, your body appears as a white, luminous crystal, pure and without impurities, radiating light in the ten directions. You are naked, without adornments, signifying the innermost essence, the primordial state.

Endowed with the dual wisdom of emptiness and skillful means, with compassion, you contemplate the benefit of beings. You embody Dzogchen, the

Great Perfection, supreme among teachings, the essence of the awakened consciousness of the realized ones, the pinnacle of the path of realization, the heart of tantras, of essential scriptures, and of secret instructions. You point to the natural state, the self-clarified basis of delusion, which is samsara*, and of liberation, which is nirvana*, as well as of the defects and virtues of sounds, lights, and rays.

Words in italics followed by an asterisk are explained in the Glossary at the end of the book.

Having completely dissolved the darkness of the minds of beings, you allow us to experience the basis as empty and rootless, and simultaneously realize all stages of the path.

Experiences and realization become manifest, and samsara and nirvana are liberated in one's own natural mind. In that vastness, the three dimensions, which are the fruit, manifest.

With singular devotion, I pray to you, Tapihritsa, protector of beings, grant me the blessing of bestowing empowerment upon myself and other beings.

May external, internal, and secret obstacles be pacified.

And may the error of self-grasping, which is ignorance, be liberated.

Having recognized one's own awakened consciousness, may vision and conduct be fully realized.

Please grant me, at this very moment, the great meaning—beyond intellect—of the primordial, empty, and rootless basis.

To you, Tapihritsa, noble protector of beings, I plead: May the beings of the six realms be protected by your compassion, and may my mind be liberated!

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The ancient knowledge of Dzogchen*, "the Great Perfection," is still little known in the Western world.

Although in recent years access to publications in Western languages on this subject has been increasing, the essential meaning of Dzogchen is still difficult for many Westerners to fully comprehend because it is very different from the materialistic worldview.

The teachings of the Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet consist of three main paths: Sutra, the path of renunciation; Tantra, the path of transformation; and Dzogchen, the path of liberation.

These three paths originated from the three primordial Buddhas—the Buda of the Nirmanakaya, *the Buda of the Sambhogakaya*, and the Buda of the Dharmakaya*—because the knowledge of the sutric teachings was transmitted from the Nirmanakaya, the tantric teachings from the Sambhogakaya, and the Dzogchen teachings from the Dharmakaya.

The Buda of the Dharmakaya, Kuntu Zangpo*, originally transmitted Dzogchen knowledge to nine consecutive masters through mind-to-mind transmission. Subsequently, 24 masters, each in turn, received the knowledge through oral transmission. An essential way of teaching Dzogchen is through direct transmission, using minimal words and symbolic language.

Although some schools of Tibetan Buddhism today claim to practice Dzogchen, only the Nyingmapas and the Bonpos have a long history of lineage transmissions or texts on Dzogchen. Each of these two traditions has a particular lineage; however, both share the same principles of Dangelen and many of the practices.

According to the Nine Paths of Bon, Dzogchen is considered the highest form of teaching. For practitioners with the capacity, it offers the potential for liberation within a single lifetime and within a single body.

In Bon, there are three main Dzogchen lineages. They are known as:

A Tri Dzogchen Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud*

Each of these three is a separate lineage with different origins and unique teachings; however, all these teachings share identical principles.

The Dzogchen teachings of both Bon and Nyingma can be further divided into three categories, depending on the emphasis of the teachings:

Sem De teachings (mind series), which emphasize the aspect of emptiness. Long De teachings (space series), which emphasize the aspect of clarity. Men Ngak De teachings (quintessential instructions), which emphasize the inseparable state of emptiness and clarity. A simple way to explain the Dzogchen approach is to summarize its three primary principles:

Limited Vision (Dawa Thado!): From the Dzogchen perspective, each of us is already pure and complete, and nothing can change that state. However, most of the time, we experience a basic feeling of lacking something. Everything in society around us recognizes and corroborates the feeling of incompleteness, and encourages us to fill the void with material things instead of awakening us with knowledge.

With this fundamental misunderstanding, we wander in samsara trying to prove our identity and amass possessions, thereby only producing more pain, suffering, and the feeling of being completely trapped. Very often, we don't even realize the extent of our suffering.

The nature of our being is space: pure and complete, like the clear, limitless sky. The clouds of our thoughts obscure this clarity. We focus on the clouds, remaining ignorant of the sky, and thus feel dejected.

Spontaneous Meditation (Gompa Rangsal): Throughout our lives, we put great effort into being happy, peaceful, and loving, and into finally finding the answers to life and a connection with our deepest selves. But through the teachings, we come to realize that no matter how hard we try, these efforts are not bringing us any closer to our goals. This is because effort itself is a product of the conceptual mind, and the conceptual mind is incapable of directly connecting with and realizing the truth. As we practice being more open and exert less effort, we discover that the qualities we seek are present effortlessly, just as a peacock feather is naturally beautiful without requiring creative effort.

Flexible Behavior (Chodpa Lugpa): All our behaviors as human beings are conditioned by our family upbringing, our society, our studies, and the opinions of others. We feel trapped by these conditionings and believe we have to try hard to untie the conditional knots to find ourselves. As a result, our lives become full of effort, and our behavior lacks flexibility.

Unconditioned space, however, has a quality of spontaneity. When we can connect with that unconditioned space, with unlimited vision, a quality of spontaneity naturally arises within us. We become more open and flexible.

THE DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS

...

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS DZOGCHEN?

When you hear or read about Dzogchen, think that it is about yourself. The Great Perfection means that your essence is primordially perfect in itself.

Dzogchen [dzog chen] literally translates as: [dzog] "perfection," "achievement," or "realization" which is [chen] "complete," "great"; that is, it means "complete totality," "the great fullness," or "the great perfection." Thanks to these teachings, many great Masters have achieved what is known as the "rainbow body" because

Dzogchen is the supreme and direct path to realization and the path of self-liberation—in a single lifetime—from the illusory cycle of samsaric transmigration.

When you hear or read about Dzogchen, think that it is about yourself. Think of the Great Perfection, which means that your essence is primordially perfect in itself. The Great Perfection refers largely to the essence of humanity, the essence of the individual. And although you sometimes feel: "I am getting old, I have this knee pain, my head hurts, I have this confusion," despite all this, you can still think: "I am the great perfection."

"The Dzogchen path is a journey to the center, it is a path to the essence and the source; it is not a philosophy or a religion: it is a journey to oneself.

Generally, we say that the essence is beyond anything; it is beyond concepts, words, philosophies, and religions.

You can think about yourself and how you experience yourself; you can reflect on this by asking yourself: "How do I experience myself?" Another question would be: "Am I experiencing what I truly am?" When you decide to find yourself, you are embarking on your spiritual path. But what do we mean by this? What do we understand by a spiritual path? What is your goal, what is your plan? You want to be free, to recognize the essence, to reconnect with it, to remain there, and to continue.

When you hear the words: "You are going to meditate, try to relax," you change something: you modify your posture, and then something changes. You have the idea that you must relax and that something must change, that this is the time to follow your spiritual path, and that you must modify many things. What you are saying is that you have to go somewhere to find yourself, and that is not the Dzogchen approach.

In Dzogchen, different means are introduced to recognize ourselves, and it is said that this recognition comes through experience. Without experience, it would be very difficult to recognize ourselves. Even self-recognition is an experience. Every time we talk about meditation, we are talking about experience because that is all there is: everything is experience.

In principle, it would make no sense to have experiences if we had no connection to the one having the experience.

No matter how incredible the experience, it is not what counts; what counts is who has it.

When the master introduces you to the natural state of the mind, he asks you about your experience of it: whether the nature of the mind has a shape or color or a precise location; then he asks about the origin and nature of thought: where thought arises, where it remains, and where it dissolves, and who observes the thought. He might ask: "Who are you?" or "What is your mind? Does it have a color or a shape?" or "Where do your thoughts come from?" without even suggesting an answer. Only when you have achieved deep understanding through your own experience does the master show you the nature of the mind, directly pointing to the knowledge you have acquired through your own experience, and gives you an explanation about kunzhi* (the basis) and rigpa* (awakened consciousness) and their inseparability in the primordial state. In this way, your understanding will be clear and real, since what the master explains and clarifies is the knowledge that you yourself have acquired through your own direct experience. The master does not introduce his own concept, nor something that you yourself have not experienced (that would produce merely intellectual understanding); he introduces you to that which you have already found within yourself.

It is necessary for you yourself to have this direct experience, and the surest way to have it is to practice zhiné*. Otherwise, it is very easy to have intellectual fantasies about the nature of the primordial state, about "emptiness," "clarity," "light," "supreme joy," and so on. When you access the natural state through the practice of zhiné, you can understand it completely and are able to enter and remain in the state of contemplation. That is trekchöd,* one of the two main Dzogchen practices.

In Dzogchen, there are four ways of introduction to the natural state of the mind:

Through the senses. Through memories. Through thoughts. Through emotions. Observe these four experiences, which are all you can have at this moment. To do this, ask yourself: "What am I hearing? What am I seeing? What am I remembering? What am I thinking? And what am I feeling?" and connect with all those things.

Each of these ways is a door, and that door can function in two directions: as an entrance or an exit. In your daily life, experiences, especially if they are intense like emotional experiences—attachments, envy, fear—are almost always used to exit, that is, to move away from yourself; the moment you have the experience, you forget that it is connected to the one having the experience. The perception of your true nature is obscured by the intensity of the experience, and you completely lose yourself.

CHAPTER 2

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TEACHINGS AND TOWARD THE MASTER

When the disciple receives the teachings, first he listens, then he reflects, meditates, and experiences, and finally, he is liberated from the experience.

When you go to a retreat to receive teachings, what do you want? What are you looking for? Do you want to return home with many notes and recordings, photocopies, and other information, or do you want to leave with a qualitative change within you and in your life? I am not saying that obtaining information is bad; what I mean is that there must be a good balance between information and experience.

I have observed that many people go to retreats or seminars with the main objective, conscious or unconscious, of gathering information. That is not the true intention with which one should approach the teachings. The point is that you work with yourself and in relation to things that perhaps apparently have nothing to do with the specific topic of the retreat or with Buddhism, but that do have to do with your life. Perhaps receiving teachings can bring about a change in your life. On the other hand, it is important to learn and gather certain information.

When I was growing up, I learned in a very academic way. Imagine learning the Dharma* in university. In a retreat, I am the Master and you are the student; we practice; you hear the Dharma, but there are no exams; you leave with what you have obtained, and there is no type of evaluation. When I was in the Monastery, we learned like in any school and had exams. For example: when we studied a root text with its commentary, we had to memorize the root text, which consisted of 20 pages, and also the commentary, which could consist of two hundred pages. The root text covers the entire teaching from beginning to end, and when one reads the commentary line by line, one understands the text. When one is ready, one presents oneself before His Holiness the Abbot and the Lopon*, prepares a good jug of tea, offers it to His Holiness, makes prostrations, gives him a khata, and tells him that one is ready, and then does the same with the Lopon. The next day, both meet in His Holiness's chambers, along with the geko,* the monastery disciplinarian, who carries a rather long stick, which is not for hitting but is quite intimidating. One presents the texts to them, makes prostrations, sits down, and reads the text from the title to the colophon. I learned in that academic way, and I consider it important that you, as a student, learn the texts with all the details, but it is not necessary to collect them. Sometimes it bothers me to see students

collecting texts as if they were information collectors; the point is to receive the teachings and connect with their essence.

What kind of person is suitable for receiving these teachings, and what kind of person is not? The unsuitable people are those who like to think all the time, who are dominated by their thoughts.

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TEACHINGS AND TOWARD THE MASTER »»» 9

Sometimes we see people struggling with their heads; their hearts deeply desire to relax, but their heads do not allow it, and there is a real war between the heart and the head. The transmission of Dzogchen teachings does not suit people who are dominated by their heads. There is not only the mental, conceptual part; in addition, sufficient clarity is necessary.

It is necessary to understand the principle of the basis [kunzhi], the essence; the experience arising from the basis is that everything is equal, and this provides great flexibility. When there is not a strong connection with the basis, we are carried away by judgments: "it is right" or "it is wrong." People who are carried away by this duality are not suitable for receiving these teachings; nor are those who are very attached to specific facts, those who have certain very limited ideas about their lives, who are extremely closed-minded. I am referring to people who do not have an openness beyond what they can see, beyond the material things they can grasp, beyond what they can cling to: that does not go well with Dzogchen. The suitable person for receiving Dzogchen teachings is the opposite of all the above: an open, flexible person, not dominated by their thoughts, and who experiences devotion.

Now, how is this type of experiential transmission taught to suitable people? The teaching must be very concise, very clear, and very pure, so that it is not mixed with other types of explanations or thoughts. This also applies to the notes you take. When you write something, you are not necessarily writing what I say but what you hear; the words may be similar to what I say, but their meaning can be very different; therein lies a risk. To receive the teachings, it is necessary for you to be open and flexible and not to judge, filter, or nuance the experience through other thoughts or philosophies.

On the other hand, when the master is transmitting the teachings to the student, he is basing himself on his most essential experience and teaches from it; he does not say, "I believe," "I suppose," "I heard." What the master teaches is based on his own direct experience, not on conceptualizations.

Furthermore, it is necessary that neither the master nor the student be affected by emotions or circumstances; the teaching must be pure. For example, I may be teaching now, but if I didn't sleep well last night, I am teaching based on not sleeping well; or, on the other hand, if you heard snoring all night, or didn't like

breakfast, you come with all this baggage to receive the teachings and are not clear to listen. If you do not come with clarity, nor does the master have it, the communication becomes something else, another type of experiential transmission: for example, the experiential transmission of breakfast.

The student must be prepared to receive the teachings. When you are prepared, the level at which the teachings are given and received is very different. There are some stories about the teachings according to which the master says only one word, for example, the syllable A, and in that syllable the entire teaching is contained. Or, his appearance in a dream may suffice. The point is that the capacity to receive teachings has to do with the authenticity or degree of preparation of the student.

One way to learn is to read, study, memorize. However, some masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud* did not know how to read and yet achieved the "rainbow body." There is

a story of a master who was reading a text in Tibetan, and sometimes he mispronounced it because he was from another region of Tibet; he realized this, so he asked his master for some teaching that did not require reading in Tibetan. Then the master gave him the introduction to Dzogchen. The master gave him that transmission because he saw that the disciple was prepared.

Regarding the disciple's lack of preparation, there is a metaphor expressed by the words Khabuc chab dol chen nó [Kha bub zhabs rdol dug can rnodl.

Khabuc nó means a vessel that is upside down. The student is like a jug, and the teaching is like nectar. The jug must be empty for the nectar to fit in it; and not only must it be empty; if it is inverted, that is an error: one can pour and pour nectar, and nothing remains inside, it all spills out.

Chab dol nó means that the jug is upright but has a hole; then one pours the nectar, and the next day there is nothing inside; no matter how much nectar is poured into the jug, nothing ever remains in it.

Chen nó means that the jug is in the correct position and has no hole, but it is not clean. When nectar is poured into it, it becomes contaminated, and that is not very good.

Listen, Reflect, Meditate, Experience, and Dissolve

[When the disciple receives the teachings, first he listens, then he reflects, meditates, and experiences, and finally, he is liberated from the experience.

Listening: We often don't know how to listen; we are listening, but when we realize it, the teaching has already ended, and we remember nothing. Sometimes we don't listen precisely: what we hear is not even remotely close to what the teaching is. The level of listening you should have is that of a hunter searching for a deer; when he spots it, his breathing is careful; he walks slowly and cautiously and is very focused. Furthermore, it is necessary to listen with devotion and inspiration.

Reflecting and Understanding: Perhaps during a retreat, you don't have time to reflect on everything you hear there, but whenever you hear the Dharma, it is important to draw some conclusion and reflect on what you have heard. It is necessary to understand the meaning of the teaching. For example, can you say what rigpa means or what union means? First, you hear the definition, and then you understand the meaning. Once you have reflected on the meaning, you meditate on it.

Meditating: By meditating, we mean carrying out the practice by going to your deepest self.

Experiencing: As a result of meditation, you experience something within yourself. The experiences we can have are infinite. Generally, we say they bring blessings, clarity, emptiness. But do not try to understand what kind of experience yours is. Simply remain open to it, allow it to happen, because if you try to conceptualize it, you will only block it. So, be open to experiences, but do not let them influence you; simply try to continue experiencing with your attention.

Dissolving is detaching from the experience. In Dzogchen, the most important thing is to let go of the experience once it has been had.

Many academic problems arise between the first three points and the fourth: you listen well, you reflect well, but you don't have the experience; there is an enormous distance between them. This happens to many people, and it even happens in academic circles; it also happens in monasteries when one is studying to obtain the Geshe degree: it takes many years to learn all that information, and surely during those nine years of learning, one does not experience everything; but many people are not aware of this fact.

Regarding this learning process, there are several suitable metaphors. One refers to the words I say when I am teaching. I speak, and you listen: How do you listen to these words? If we put some glue on the wall and threw rice, it should stick there. What I say is the rice, and you are that wall with glue; this means that the moment I say things, they stick in your mind. The opposite would be like a dry wall: anything I throw bounces back to me, nothing sticks, and it shouldn't be that way. This is the metaphor regarding the listening part.

The second metaphor is related to meaning. I consider this system very important: word—meaning—experience—integration. This system consists of four stages, and the second is meaning. What you hear has a meaning, and it is necessary that you understand it. If you understand it, the experience will be like lighting a candle in the darkness. When you understand the teaching, it is like turning on a light bulb. When you don't understand, the same thing happens to you as to a blind person shown a piece of precious silk: the fact that the silk is shown does not light anything up for them. There was a person in the Dolanjí monastery who impressed me greatly: she had beautiful handwriting and wrote very fast; Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche* would teach something, and she would note it down. Then Yongdzin would ask, for example: "What are the five wisdoms?" and give explanations, and that person would keep writing; after a month, Yongdzin was talking about the exact same topic, and the person was still writing; she no longer remembered how many times she had written the explanation of the five wisdoms. This means she was writing but not listening. It is possible to write without understanding.

The transition from meaning to experience is like experiencing salt or lemon. When you experience lemon in a tortilla or in beer or in a dessert, you can clearly feel that different taste, and when the lemon is not there, you perceive its absence. It is not something you can doubt; you cannot doubt that taste: it is very clear when you try it. If you don't try it, you don't realize it. Another example is a child seeing a beautiful rainbow and not knowing what it really is; they know it is very beautiful, and they want to run to catch it because it is so beautiful. The same happens with those beautiful experiences in life that you want to grasp, or to which you want to cling, and at that very moment, you lose them. This is like my metaphor of taking a photograph of the rainbow: when people see a beautiful rainbow, they say, "The camera, where is the camera?" I say, don't look for the camera; if you have it with you, you'll want to take the photo, but perhaps you'll find that the camera has no film, or that the film is only black and white, or perhaps you'll see that you've already taken the last photo, or that you have no batteries, and by then the rainbow is gone. This is how we live our lives.

The biggest problem people face is related to this third point: they understand, but they cannot experience.

The fourth metaphor refers to integration. It is like an experience that cannot be traced, that leaves no trace. In a healing or purification practice, what are you purifying? Your karma, your karmic traces. These are traces that remain within you, like when you remove garlic from a cup and the smell stays in the cup: the trace is there.

One of the most beautiful texts of Dzogchen is "Cha tal je me" [Bya bral rjes med], which means "leaving no trace." It is being like a yogi who is beyond leaving a

trace: every time we have an experience, we are liberated from it, and thus we are constantly free from our past and from these experiences.

In Dzogchen, it is very important to be free of these experiences. However, we love experiences. In the West, there is a strong tendency to cling to experiences and to recount them: "I saw this," "I felt that." While it is more common for people to understand without being able to experience, on the other hand, attachment to experiences is one of the greatest obstacles. When Tapihritsa* manifested to teach Nangzher Lodpo*, it was largely because one of the difficulties Nangzher Lodpo experienced was his strong attachment to experiences. When we lack clarity, it is very common for us to become victims of experiences. This implies a disconnection from the basis (kunzhi); when we are connected to the basis, experiences do not have so much importance.

The metaphor, then, is that the basis is free of these traces, just as when a bird flies from a rock: one sees no trace of the bird on the rock.

These four principles are very important for receiving the experiential transmission of Dzogchen teachings in a healthy and correct way. Likewise, it is important to open the heart with pure devotion and pray for help in understanding and experiencing the teachings.

THE MIND

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CHAPTER 3

THE CHANGING MIND, THE GRASPING MIND

We all have a mind, and we all have limitations in our mind. These have their root in ignorance.

In Dzogchen teachings, when we speak of the mind, we first refer to all the limitations of the changing mind, conceptual mind, or ordinary mind, and how we can free ourselves from them, and then we address the natural mind. All of us—both human beings and other sentient beings—have a mind, and we all have limitations in our mind. The limitations of the mind have their root in ignorance, and it is the same for all beings.

The conceptual or changing mind is the common mind of ordinary experience, the one that constantly deals with thoughts, memories, images, internal dialogues, judgments, meanings, emotions, and fantasies. It is what we normally identify as "I" and "my experience." Its essential dynamic is related to a dual perspective of existence. It considers itself a subject in a world of objects and clings to certain

parts of experience while rejecting others. It reacts, and sometimes it does so wildly; but even when it achieves supreme tranquility and subtlety—as in states of intense meditation or concentration—it continues to maintain the attitude of an entity observing its environment and therefore continues to participate in duality.

The conceptual mind is not limited to language and ideas. Language, with its nouns, verbs, subjects, and objects, is necessarily dual, but the conceptual mind is active even before language acquisition. In this sense, animals have conceptual minds, as do babies and those born without the ability to speak. The conceptual mind is the result of habitual karmic tendencies that are present before birth and, therefore, before we develop a sense of self. Its essential characteristic is to instinctively divide experience in a dualistic way, starting with subject and object, with self and non-self.

The Mother Tantra refers to this mind as an "active manifestation of the natural mind." It is that which arises from the movement of karmic prana and manifests in the form of thoughts, concepts, and other mental activities. If the changing mind quiets down completely, it dissolves into the nature of the mind, and only resurfaces when activity itself reconstitutes it.

The activities of the changing mind can be virtuous, non-virtuous, or neutral. The first are those that allow the experience of the nature of the mind to occur; the neutral ones disturb the connection with this nature, and the non-virtuous ones create more disturbances and lead to greater disconnection.

The changing mind works very hard and thereby obtains an ego bound to the duality of subject and object, and also to the experience of suffering. We live in the memories of the past and in fantasies about the future, severed from the direct experience of the beauty and luminosity of life.

The mind is the origin of everything; the mind is the origin of happiness, pain, knowledge, confusion, understanding, misunderstanding. It is the source. Everything we do, whether we do it well or badly—every mistake or success—comes from the mind: the mind is everything. Everything we do is because the mind does it; if we have confusion or behave wrongly, it is because the mind does so. If we act correctly and begin to have positive attitudes and thoughts and obtain positive results, it is due to the mind. So, the mind is the origin of everything.

For example, currently, alternative medicine tries to connect the body with the mind to alleviate physical problems; hence the importance of understanding the mind. What we have developed over centuries in the Tibetan tradition is not a technology but a way of understanding the mind.

There is much to offer in terms of knowledge of the mind; there are many practices, and some seem strange, like the practice of Chöd (offering of the body);

during this practice, the person visualizes being invaded by spirits and offers their body for those spirits to feed on. When this is not understood, it seems very strange, even diabolical, but it is not so. The principle behind this practice is very simple: how much attachment have I developed in relation to my body? Attachment to the body is the greatest of our attachments.

One of the main problems lies in the principle of ownership, which is attachment. When we possess something, problems begin. For example, when you rent a house, all the problems that arise are for the landlord; you just pay rent and don't worry about the house: you enjoy it, you live more in the moment. When you say, "I can buy this house now," and you start saving and finally buy it and sign the deed, then you find that the problems that were previously the landlord's are now yours: the floor isn't right, the kitchen needs repairing... Now you have all those problems you didn't have before. You lived in that house for years and were very happy in it, and now, instead, all those problems surface. It's the same house, you're the same person living there; the problem arose out of nowhere. Where did it come from? It's just a mental trick; now the mind thinks: "all this is mine," and that's where the problem lies: the mind no longer has the same capacity to relax as before.

The mind is the source of everything, and we can change our mind; we can change our mental attitude by accessing the Dharma, the teachings, receiving blessings, power, and knowledge, and all that makes our eyes open, and we begin to see a different world. We know when the teachings are working because the problems we had before no longer arise. Things that made us nervous no longer provoke that sensation. Things that were very serious for us and made us angry no longer make us feel that way; we have opened our being and live in a different dimension. The change in mental attitude has changed our lives.

I will give an example of the power of the mind, which becomes evident when we get angry—we all know what it's like to be angry—and we also know that some people get angry more than they should.

First: why do we get angry? No matter our nationality, we all get angry at some point. The expressions of anger can vary according to cultural conditioning: some cry, others laugh; but everyone has some reaction. Some people don't have much anger, and that's good. In Tibetan Buddhism, we differentiate between a healthy absence of anger and the repression of anger. Perhaps many people don't feel anger because they repress it, and perhaps some people don't feel anger because they don't have it. The second case is fine; the first is not. When we get angry, everything in us changes at the biological level: our body feels different; our face turns red; our expression changes, our language changes; or we may use the same language, but our intonation changes; our mental attitude changes, our way of interacting with others changes; everything around us changes: the people we live

with change, our family changes. If we are powerful politicians, we change the nation.

The result is that a single anger causes very great effects. Why? Because at that moment, we live in a different dimension. If we want to change the external, if we want to live in peace, if we want to change our way of speaking, if we want to change our behavior, we will have to change our mind. Only then can we change everything else. If we try to change the external without anything changing within ourselves, we will not succeed.

A Tibetan saying goes: "If you want to stop the flow of a stream, you cannot do it from any of its parts; you have to stop it from the origin." Thus, the mind is the origin of everything we experience.

The reason we get angry is that we have a certain perspective. For example, if an intimate friend hurts us and we are mugged on the street, we will obviously get angrier with our friend than with the street mugger, because we think that in friendship, one should not do something that hurts; we expect a superior attitude from our friend, and that is our point of view or our determined perspective. This is what makes us angry: we expect our friend never to do anything that hurts us, but he is a human being.

Expectation is what creates the problem. We live life through our point of view, our frame of reference. Imagine what would happen if you didn't have the point of view you have, imagine what would happen if you didn't have a frame of reference. Can you imagine it? You would be liberated.

CHAPTER 4

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REMAINING IN CALM: ZHINÉ

If the changing mind quiets down completely, it dissolves into the nature of the mind.

How to Free Ourselves from the Limitations of the Mind

When we speak of liberation, we do not mean freeing ourselves from another person, but freeing ourselves from the limitations of our own mind. Since the mind is the source of everything, we must understand and control it. "Control" is not a very pleasant word, but initially, discipline is control. In Eastern traditions, the first thing to do is to calm the mind and achieve inner peace, find self-understanding, and from there begin to move. What do you need to calm? You need to calm your thinking, your thinking mind. Imagine how many thoughts you

have per day; some traditions say we have 84,000 thoughts per day and that they travel like waves. It is very important to find a way to remain in calm, to achieve tranquility of the mind. The meditative practice to achieve this is called Zhiné [zhi means tranquility, ne means to achieve or maintain], which means: to acquire calm, to remain in a state of calm, to give consciousness a place of calm, and it is the basis of most practices. As long as you have a mind, that will be your practice. If you have a mind and your mind is restless, then you need the practice of residing in calm. To do anything with your moving mind, you first need to calm it. This emphasis on calm or Zhiné is very important.

To calm your thoughts, you must use: the body, speech, and mind.

Calming the Body, Speech, and Mind

The first thing you do is adopt a good bodily posture, follow your breath, and try to calm your mind. It is important that the body, breath, and mind go together; in this way, they can act effectively. I give a simple example: when you go to the bathroom, you have a correct posture and adequate concentration; you cannot be preoccupied; your mind is focused on the prana of elimination, and in this way, you obtain results. If you forget any aspect, you cannot obtain the results.

The same happens with meditation: you must calm the mind, adopt an appropriate posture, try to follow the body, breath, and mind. I will suggest the appropriate posture, but if you find it difficult, you can find the position that is most comfortable for you.

Bodily Posture

Cross-legged.

Straight back.

Expanded chest. Chin slightly tucked in (this ensures the spine is straight, which facilitates energy flow up and down more smoothly). Hands in the equanimity posture (thumb lightly pressing the base of the ring finger, and the left hand resting on the right). Speech Posture

Remain silent, with the tongue slightly raised and the lips slightly parted to breathe easily. Mind Posture

Do not dwell on the past. Do not plan the future. Do not change the present. The point is that you are in the moment with yourself, finding yourself. It is about being conscious. At this level, you need to fix your attention, have clarity and sharpness; it is not about falling asleep.

In our tradition, there are two stages of meditation: one is known as remaining in calm [Zhiné], and the other as direct and profound understanding of the natural state [Lhag tong].

Remaining in calm means calming our mind and developing a strong sense of bodily and mental stability. Bodily stability is equivalent to feeling like a mountain, with a solid and stable body, and the mind feels the same way, very stable. Within that space, an understanding of the natural mind develops; that understanding of the natural mind is called direct and profound understanding. Lhag tong is the result of Zhiné. In Zhiné, one does not necessarily have to experience Lhag tong, but Lhag tong is indeed a result of the experience of Zhiné. Therefore, to experience Lhag tong, the direct and profound understanding of the natural mind, you must develop Zhiné. The purpose of remaining in calm is to discover that direct and profound understanding and to have a connection with the natural state of the mind.

The practice of Zhiné is very important because to discover something very profound within ourselves, we need to achieve a state of deep calm in the mind, a calm introspection. The mind always goes outward and very rarely inward. When you want to reach a deep state of meditation, you want your mind to be calm, not agitated.

Three Levels of Remaining in Calm

There are three different levels of Zhiné. You have surely experienced driving a car; to explain the three levels of Zhiné practice, I use the example of the three stages of driving a car:

The first level is called Zhiné with effort and involves total effort. The first day you drive a car is a day full of effort: total effort. When I learned to drive, I learned in a manual car, not automatic; the friend who taught me said, "Now you can change gears," and I replied, "No!" For that day, I had had enough: if I changed gears, I would crash into the wall. There was a lot of energy in the car, and in the end, my friend was all red. This is called total effort because all the thoughts in that activity become as powerful as when we hear the sounds of a clock: those tick-tocks almost destroy the space. That is what we call total effort. It's like trying to learn to drive: at first, you can't do much; you have to concentrate and not get distracted by changing the CD, you can't be looking at other things.

The second level is natural Zhiné. The reason the second is called natural Zhiné is that it becomes natural once you have worked with effort. Following the same driving example, when you already have experience, you can drink coffee and read the newspaper when the traffic light is red, and you can integrate your life into driving; all those experiences do not affect your driving.

The third level, absolute Zhiné, is when you are already driving and then you can put on lipstick and eye makeup, read the newspaper (people do many things in the car). That is called absolute Zhiné. Truck drivers must definitely have absolute Zhiné, because trucks are very difficult to drive. Similarly, during meditation, when thoughts arise, it is still possible to maintain presence and one can say, "Yes, there is a thought; but I won't worry too much about it." A thought arises like, "I should have done that; well, I'll do it later," or "But I also have to do this other thing." When many thoughts arise, but they are not very long, and you can continue to maintain presence, that is called absolute Zhiné. Basically, the definition of absolute Zhiné is the ability to integrate thoughts and experience with the natural state of the mind.

CHAPTER 5

THE LIMITED PERSPECTIVE AND THE UNLIMITED PERSPECTIVE (DZOGCHEN)

We must recognize that our way of experiencing ourselves is limited, [...] and we try to define the world based on our own limited mind. In Dzogchen, the perspective is unlimited.

Entering the spiritual path in search of experiences to feel more connected with ourselves is a very limited perspective; we must recognize that our way of experiencing ourselves is limited. The only way to have a true experience of consciousness or ourselves is to know and realize that this limitation exists.

We have so many limitations within ourselves that we try to solve everything with this limited sense of things and try to define the world based on our own limited mind. In Dzogchen, the perspective is unlimited.

To understand the unlimited Dzogchen perspective, we must understand what limits or boundaries consist of. A simple way to put it is that limits are our thoughts, our words, our concepts, our language, our assertions: all of these are limits. A limit is not necessarily good or bad, nor does it mean that only bad people need them. Limits are good for those who need them. A limit is a resource for survival, and most people cannot survive if they set aside limits. Buddha survived without limits, but we cannot. Some of these limits make us feel good, others make us feel bad. We flee from those that make us feel bad and try to seek support in those that make us feel good. These are our limits, and as long as we need them, we must have them.

The Dzogchen perspective and the practitioner's perspective are two different things. My Master, Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, always emphasizes this difference. People confuse their way of being with the perspective they want to have; they confuse perspective with themselves, but they are two different things.

There is a difference between Dzogchen and the dzogchenpa or Dzogchen practitioner: Dzogchen is unlimited, but the dzogchenpa is limited; we are limited, the Dzogchen perspective is unlimited. If we try to mix the limited with the unlimited, there will be conflict. And anyone who meditates is limited, that is for sure.

Every sentient being—whether a person, a small insect, or a large elephant—has an unlimited perspective within itself. We can imagine the unlimited perspective, think about it, and even talk about it when we say it is beyond words, and we try to use words in the best possible way to communicate an understanding of the perspective that is beyond words. The unlimited perspective has to do with what we call ka dag, which means "primordially pure." The unlimited perspective is primordially perfect; it is our essence; it is the nature of the Buddha, and every sentient being has the totally unlimited Buddha within itself.

We speak of body, speech, and mind. In terms of speech, we say that the Dzogchen perspective is unspeakable, beyond expression. In terms of action, it is impossible to fabricate: it cannot be fabricated, it cannot be created, it can only be. In terms of mind, the Dzogchen perspective cannot be thought; it is impossible to form an idea of it, but we try, because if we have a pure experience, we want to know what it is. Very few people are content with the experience as it is; everyone wants to know something about that experience: "I had a dream, what does it mean?" "I had an experience, what was it?" Of course, I am not going to say it is wrong to ask this or that you should not do it; but when you talk about something, you are talking from a limited perspective. However, as I said, as long as you need limits, you must have them.

When your perspective is not limited by fears and conflicts, you can live difficult situations, and your body remains relaxed. Then your body can do many more things than when it is trembling and tense. Your speech is relaxed, and you can use language in a different way than usual, and the mind is creative. When the perspective is freer, the body, speech, and mind are less limited. This is not an unlimited perspective, but it is a freer perspective that allows you to respond more freely and spontaneously and with less effort to a situation. The less limited your perspective, the more spontaneous your meditation or experience will be, and the more flexible your behavior will be.

CHAPTER 6

MEDITATION

If our inner being is obscured by good or bad thoughts, it is the same; the point is to experience our true self beyond the conceptual mind: this is Dzogchen.

Many people use meditation to reduce tension and improve health, but this is not the purpose of meditation; its purpose is to achieve enlightenment. And what is enlightenment? Enlightenment means becoming a complete human being. We are in samsara, which is a state of consciousness in which we can easily get angry or jealous, and in which we can easily have a very changeable mood, and thus we can continue for many lives. This is samsara; we are in samsara.

People who practice meditation want to escape samsara and overcome limitations, to be liberated like a bird from its nest. And those who realize that happiness is not found in samsara seek it within themselves, going to their deepest selves to discover themselves, finding a Master, opening their hearts, receiving sacred teachings, and applying them as a whole. This is how we will achieve the enlightenment that is within ourselves; this is how we will achieve the state of Buddha within ourselves. We all have the Buddha within us and need to discover it. Regardless of our nationality or religion, we all have it; we can call it, if we wish, God within ourselves.

The way we find it is not solely by praying; we need to practice active meditation, applying our own mind, our own body, and our own speech. We cannot ignore our body, we cannot ignore our speech, and we cannot ignore our own mind either. It is not enough to say, "God, help me!"; it doesn't work that way; we must act within our own existence.

Three Systems of Meditation

I will now explain the three systems of meditation: Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen. All three have the same goal: to achieve enlightenment by overcoming obstacles and connecting with wisdom, but each has a specific way. The first, Sutra, we call the path of renunciation; the second, Tantra, is the path of transformation; and the third, Dzogchen, is the path of self-liberation.

What we renounce, what we transform, and what we liberate is the same: it is the darkness caused by our ignorance, by our limitations, by what we call "negative emotions" (ignorance, hatred, attachment, jealousy, and pride); the five negative emotions are the cause of suffering, and if we do not have them, we will not have suffering.

Depending on the way we decide to work, we will follow one or another of these paths. To illustrate the three paths, I will give an example: there are different ways to combat the poison of a plant; the first is that of someone who renounces the poison and discards it or stays away from the plant because it is poisonous. This would be the Sutra approach, the approach of renunciation. The second path is transformation; this would be, for example, the approach of a doctor who does not have to renounce the poisonous plant but decides to transform it: they take the plant, boil it, dry it, and turn the substance of the poison into medicine. In Tantrism, in tantric practices, things are transformed. The third path is liberation;

it is not the path of one who renounces nor of one who transforms, but consists of directly touching negative emotions. This would be like what the peacock does, which eats the poison directly: it changes nothing, nor does it renounce; on the contrary, the poison increases its vitality instead of killing it as usually happens to ordinary people.

We can see that the approaches regarding negative emotions are different in the three systems, but all three are valuable and very useful teachings for various people.

In Dzogchen, nothing is transformed, nor is renunciation sought. When trying to transform things, we tend to replace them with an antidote, which is not correct in itself because it is a conceptualized idea. It is a good thought, but it is also a problem. In terms of the mind, good and bad thoughts are the same: both are conceptualizations, and for this reason, they distract us from the natural state of the mind. To make it clearer: if you hit your head with a gold ball or if you hit it with a stone, you feel pain; the blow from gold is not better than the blow from stone. If our inner being is obscured by good or bad thoughts, it is the same; the point is to experience our true self beyond the conceptual mind: this is Dzogchen.

CHAPTER 7

OBSTACLES

Practicing Dzogchen means being in the unlimited perspective, in spontaneous meditation; then whatever you do will be spontaneous, effortless, flexible behavior.

Let's talk about the obstacles of perspective and those that arise during meditation and behavior.

Obstacles of Perspective

The obstacles related to perspective are basically two: a narrow (limited) point of view and words and concepts.

Before meditating, we need to have a perspective, an understanding: you listen, you think, you reflect, you practice, you experience, and you let go of your experiences. When you listen, make sure you listen correctly and try to put into practice what you have heard; you can hear many things, but during practice, focus your attention.

Regarding words, there is almost always a concept attached to the word; for example: the word "love" can define many things, and you can talk a lot

about it; all of that—thoughts, words, reflections—has little to do with the experience of love. The same happens with perspective: we have a word and a concept and an idea of what perspective is. We can say that perspective has no limits: this is a concept. Basically, we can say that a concept is knowledge, it is understanding; but beyond that, it is an obstacle, and this can be one of the points where many people get stuck.

When you have the experience of phenomena, you know that some produce happiness, others produce sadness; when asked what the world is, try to understand from what perspective you are seeing it; that is what the teachings are about. But often, when we talk about this, it becomes an abstract or conceptual discussion. We can arrive at philosophical images and words that define the experience very well. But anyway, what is the point of arriving at a definition with words? It doesn't make much sense. Thus, the obstacle of perspective is words: that is, when one can define something very clearly but does not have the experience of it. In that case, defining perspective makes no sense. For example, it can happen that a person has a very clear idea of how they want to arrange their garden and what flowers they want to plant in it and how it will look; but when we look at their garden, we see that it is all arid. This means that the word and the idea did not lead to the experience. This is the obstacle of perspective.

Talking and thinking are within the context of the limited perspective. When we talk about something, there is an obstacle; when we think about it, it is an obstacle. Even what I have written here can create more obstacles. Obviously, this does not mean that we should not impart teachings using words; we need to use them. The Dharma always has to do with the individual's needs, which is why we talk about 84,000 different Dharmas, nine paths, four vehicles, five wisdoms, etc. These are different things. Why are there so many different things? Because people want different things; not everyone agrees on one single thing, because people have different perspectives: they think about things differently, they have different points of view. They need to see what they need to see. That is their perspective. This perspective is limited, and words and concepts are limited, and this is an obstacle, especially in Dzogchen.

Obstacles Arising During Meditation

There are three types of obstacles that commonly arise during meditation, and it is important to recognize what they are:

The first is the state of drowsiness, which corresponds to the obscuration of the essence. When we talk about that state of drowsiness, we think of ignorance, doubt, being sleepy, lack of clarity; all these things are related and belong to the same family. Some people, when they lack clarity, feel sleepy and actually fall asleep, and there is a specific meditation to work with this type of obstacle. That

same obstacle also manifests in their lives: some people are fine when they are not doing anything outside of routine; but when they have to make a decision, change something, or start something, they enter a dimension of doubt, where nothing is clear to them. It is the same type of obstacle: one is its manifestation in life, and the other, in meditation. These aspects of the obstacle have the same root and obscure the basis, obscure the essence.

The second obstacle has to do with the obscuration of clarity; this is what prevents us from entering more deeply into meditation: we have many ideas in our minds, and at that moment, we are very creative; at that moment of meditation, all sorts of ideas and projects arise astonishingly, distracting us. This is, basically, the second obstacle in meditation. And the same problem manifests in life. There are many people who have many ideas because they see pieces of information everywhere; they lack the energy to manifest them, but intellectually they perceive them. You can see how in their minds these people are earning millions and millions of dollars and calculating in their minds: "How much am I earning? I'm going to double it," and they always double, triple in their calculations, and they will always be multiplying, but it's not true that they will achieve it. They have many ideas, but they can hardly carry out any of them because they lack the earth element. To achieve something, they must focus on accomplishment and not on calculating; they must have more consistency, have developed the earth element along with clarity.

When, due to a lack of earth, there is insufficient clarity, the problem I have described arises. For example: there are people who, when they try to achieve something in daily life—a business, a relationship, or a project—and are not achieving it and are not changing anything, they begin to become familiar with this situation that leads nowhere; they not only become familiar with the situation, but they make friends with it and unconsciously even love it, and therefore they are not moving. Having clarity would be important for these people. I am giving concrete examples from life, as it is in life that we have the most experiences.

When we try to meditate, these obstacles can arise; sometimes our mind is not clear: we have woken up very early and are ready for our project, but the moment we see the project we have to carry out, everything becomes confusing, we lose clarity. This can also happen in meditation. We can have wonderful weather, very good friends, a beautiful altar, and the perfect teacher, but have no idea what we are doing. This normally happens to people when they attend teachings for the first time.

It is necessary to be clear about what one is supposed to be doing, that is, the objective must be clear.

The third obstacle is related to union. Basically, it arises from the lack of balance between the experiences of clarity and emptiness. One meaning of emptiness—that is, of a good connection with emptiness—is feeling stable and firm, and one meaning of clarity is growing creatively in life. It is not very easy to achieve a balance between creativity and stability. If we are very creative, we often do not have enough space or time for introspection. Great artists and musicians have many doubts; sometimes success is overwhelming, and they lack the space where they can stabilize themselves, and this kills their bodies; on a smaller scale, there are people so active that they have no time for themselves: they have too much external work, too much extroversion. On the other hand, there are very passive people who lack creativity: they have a very flat, very simple, very insipid, lukewarm experience of life.

These are the obstacles of meditation in the three aspects: that of emptiness, that of clarity, and that of the union of both.

Obstacles Arising in Behavior

The obstacle that manifests in behavior is deceiving oneself into believing that one has achieved perspective and meditation, yet having erroneous conduct. It is getting trapped in the delusion: "I have the perspective and the meditation, and now I can do whatever I want." Of course, no one can tell you if you are wrong or not, but if you know yourself well, then you can recognize this behavioral obstacle when it arises. The only way to avoid it is to change your behavior to correct behavior. For example: being impulsive is not the same as being flexible; it is rather acting according to some momentary need or desire and believing it to be flexible behavior.

Sometimes you may hear people say that someone seems limited, that they don't seem like a Dzogchen practitioner because they do this or don't do that. People have certain ideas about how a Dzogchen practitioner should act. But practicing Dzogchen does not mean you have to do or not do certain things. It is about being in the unlimited perspective, in spontaneous meditation, then whatever you do will be spontaneous, effortless, flexible behavior.

This obstacle is an example of how the intellect creates problems for one's own existence: it covers experience with an intellectual mask. This is an obstacle, and something we tend to do frequently in life. Our mind has more masks than our speech, our speech has more masks than our body's actions. If we said everything we thought, it would be a disaster, and if we did everything we said, it would also be a disaster. It is good that there are some limits between the mind and speech, between speech and the body. Even with those limits, we already have enough problems!

So, we have: vision, meditation, and behavior, and we have obstacles to perspective, meditation, and behavior. If you can reach a conclusion with this, if

you can understand and integrate it into your experience, then you will have something of Dzogchen.

CHAPTER 8

THE CHANGING MIND AND THE NATURAL MIND

When we recognize the nature of the mind and develop the capacity to remain in it, nothing can distract us.

It is important to distinguish between the ordinary, conceptual, or changing mind (sem, sems), which we have described before, and the nature of the mind (sem yi, sems nyid), which in Bon Dzogchen thought is synonymous with kunzhi, the basis of everything. In the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud, four qualities are mentioned that characterize the nature of the mind:

Absence of thoughts. Being the basis of the changing mind. Being neutral, not tending to be virtuous or non-virtuous. Having unlimited potentiality for manifestation. Four qualities are also listed during the process of reconnecting the changing mind with the natural state, which are:

Sight and memory. 46 »»» THE MIND

When the mind thinks, it can manifest any thought. When one stops thinking and observes, the changing mind is liberated into kunzhi. If one allows one's own mind to dwell in the unchanging natural state, "mother" and "son" unite inseparably. By "mother" (ma*) here we mean the basis (kunzhi), the emptiness of the natural state, experienced by the individual as the uncreated essence of the mind. "Son" (bu*) is clarity (rigpa) in the natural state, experienced by the individual as unobscured wisdom: the luminous self-awareness of the mind. The clarity and emptiness of the natural state are inseparable. These qualities refer to the ordinary mind, the changing mind: not to the basis of consciousness but to the form, a form of consciousness.

When you say: "What does the mind have to do when carrying out the practice?" this is a correct question, because it is the mind that is responsible for carrying out the practice. To illustrate the difference between the form and the basis of consciousness, I will give an example: the mind can take the form of "I need breakfast" or "I haven't had breakfast," and this is a form, a certain structure that is created; but the basis of consciousness is not what we call mind, but rather the potential, the continuum of consciousness. The mind comes and goes and adopts different forms in different situations; in contrast, this continuum of consciousness is always there, it does not stop, regardless of whether one is in a coma, unconscious, or dead: that consciousness continues.

We can ask ourselves: "What is continuity or continuity of consciousness?" The continuity of consciousness is that which never stops. Consciousness of what? Consciousness of itself. What would be the definition of this consciousness? It is said that awakened consciousness is clear in itself and luminous. And between the moment a thought ends and the moment the next one begins, there is something that is continuously there, and that something is the continuum of awakened consciousness.

Kunzhi, Rigpa, and Lo

In the Dzogchen text of the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud, we speak of: kunzhi, which is the basis of everything; rigpa, which is innate awakened consciousness; and lo, which is the mind (the form of the mind).

The first, kunzhi, is the basis of everything; it corresponds to wisdom that arises by itself and to the principle of enlightenment, and all of us have this aspect. The all-pervading quality of kunzhi is symbolized by the limitless space of extension and direction. Space is the infinite basis of all experience. By "space," we mean the external space of the sky, the inner empty space of the mind, and the space occupied by objects. Therefore, according to Dzogchen teachings, this space is not limited to external space or the space of the mind. In fact, in kunzhi, there is no distinction between inside and outside: we share the quality of space that the external world also has. Within us, there is that quality of open space which is the basis of everything.

Rigpa refers to the clarity of the natural state. The essential reality of the mind is pure, non-dual consciousness, that is, rigpa. Its essence forms a unity with the essence of everything that exists. During practice, it should not be confused with the more subtle serene and expansive states of the changing mind. When we have not yet recognized the nature of the mind, it manifests as the changing mind; but when we recognize it directly, it becomes both the path of liberation and liberation itself.

Dzogchen teachings use a mirror as a symbol of rigpa. The mirror reflects everything without judging, preferring, or choosing; it reflects beauty and ugliness, the large and the small, the virtuous and the non-virtuous. There are no limits or restrictions to what it can reflect; in fact, it never stops reflecting, and yet it is not affected or stained by what it reflects.

In the same way, the phenomena of experience arise in rigpa—thoughts, images, emotions, and the object to which one is attached: any apparent subject or object, that is, any experience. The conceptual mind itself arises and remains in rigpa. Life and death occur within the nature of the mind, but it is neither born nor dies, just as reflections come and go in the mirror without creating or destroying it.

By identifying with the conceptual mind, we live as if we were one of the mirror's reflections, reacting to other reflections, suffering confusion and pain, and incessantly living and dying. We confuse the reflections with reality and spend our lives chasing illusions.

When the conceptual mind is liberated from attachment and aversion, it spontaneously relaxes into rigpa. When that happens, there is no longer identification with the mirror's reflections, and we can appreciate each moment and effortlessly accommodate whatever arises in experience. If hatred arises, the mirror fills with hatred, and when love arises, it fills with love; for the mirror, neither has special significance; both are merely manifestations of its innate capacity to reflect. This is what has been called "mirror-like wisdom"; when we recognize the nature of the mind and develop the capacity to remain in it, no emotional state can distract us. Rather, all states and phenomena, even anger, jealousy, or any experience, are liberated in the purity and clarity that are their essence. When we remain in rigpa, we can cut karma and its roots, as well as free ourselves from the bonds of samsara.

When we develop stability in rigpa, we facilitate the achievement of other spiritual aspirations; it is much easier to practice virtue when one is free from attachment and the feeling of lack; it is easier to practice compassion when one is not obsessed with oneself, and it is also easier to practice transformation when one is not bound by false and limiting entities.

Lo is the aspect that the conceptual or changing mind adopts (see # Chapter 4). If envy appears, that is Lo; if anger appears, that is Lo, and so on.

The Mother Tantra calls the nature of the mind "primordial mind." This is like the ocean, while the ordinary mind resembles rivers, streams, and lakes which, although sharing the nature of the ocean and returning to it, exist temporarily as apparently separate entities. The changing mind is also compared to bubbles that constantly form and dissolve in the ocean of the primordial mind and depend on the force of karmic winds. For its part, the nature of the ocean does not change.

Rigpa arises spontaneously from the basis; its activity is an incessant manifestation, and all phenomena arise within it without disturbing it. The result of fully dwelling in the nature of the mind is the generation of the three bodies (kayas*) of the Buddha: Dharmakaya, which is the thought-free essence; Sambhogakaya, which is the incessant manifestation; and Nirmanakaya, which is compassionate activity not subject to delusion.

As we said, rigpa refers to clarity, to innate awakened consciousness. It is the unobscured self-awareness of the primordial state, a non-conceptual wisdom that is aware of itself and is beyond thought. It is the essence, which is clear in itself

and is not obscured. When we say rigpa, we are talking about pure awakened consciousness. In philosophical terms, we can say that not all consciousness is pure. When I am angry, that is impure consciousness. Thus, all minds have consciousness, but not all minds have the experience of rigpa, which is awakened consciousness.

If we use the analogy of a film, we can say that the film is the basis. When we film images on that film, that is the changing mind, or karmic traces, which can be positive or negative: laughing, crying, etc. Now, to see these images, light is required, a bulb. If we have these things, we can project these images onto the wall and see; what we see is karma, the mind, but we see it thanks to the light, that is, consciousness. When we see, we think we are seeing images, but in reality, we are seeing light. However, no one would pay a movie ticket just to see light; we pay for the ticket to see the images and judge the film, the director, the theme, and the photography.

It is possible to see the light through the images, although it is not very common for us to do so. When a yogi or yogini achieves great realization in their life, the world does not disappear for them; they see the same world as everyone else, but the difference is that they see it through light. They see light through all experiences: when they see a flower, they see it full of light, and they also see what we perceive as negative full of light. That light is rigpa, it is pure awakened consciousness. The most common thing is that this light is perceived as obscured by the images. When we see the form, we tend to lose the quality of luminosity. It is not necessary for the Dzogchen practitioner to abandon their life to find themselves; they do not need to renounce experience to find the truth, which can be found where it is. The practitioner is, and simply needs to see who or what they are, and needs to understand it. It is through all experiences.

Discovering the Nature of the Mind

I believe that understanding the nature of the mind is a goal for every spiritual tradition and for humanity in general, and therefore I will begin by referring to the mind and the nature of the mind. In general, the mind is very dynamic: if one feels happy, that happiness is produced by the mind; if one is sad, it is due to the mind; likewise, if one feels confident, if one has clarity, or if one is completely confused, this confidence and clarity or confusion are products of the mind. The nature of the mind is like a mirror. The mirror reflects all kinds of images: they can be beautiful images or ugly images, but it is all the same reflection; whatever is reflected in it—no matter what—is done in a pure and clear way. So, we have the nature of the mind, which is like a mirror, and also the dynamic mind, which is full of images. We all have the possibility to rediscover the nature of the mind, and we also have the possibility and the potential to become confused about what the nature of the mind is; we all have this experience.

It is necessary to be aware that there are different types of obstacles to discovering the nature of the mind. There are external obstacles, which are karmic; internal obstacles, which are linked to emotions; and secret obstacles, which are those of ignorance, also called the "secret demon."

Whenever our mind is unclear and we are disconnected from ourselves, we ask ourselves: "Why am I like this?" And we attribute what we feel to things happening outside, in our interactions with other people. We believe that the problems we have in our lives with our relatives, with our partners, are the cause of our mind being confused; that is why it is unclear: we call these external obstacles because they are karmic relationships we have with these people. We think that the people who cause us problems in our lives are the reason we cannot discover our true self, our true nature.

Then comes the internal level, which has to do with our own mind, with the emotions, thoughts, and ideas we have about whether it is good for a certain thing to happen or whether what is happening is what we want. Basically, they are thoughts and emotions that become an obstacle to discovering the nature of the mind, and because of this, our mind is like an old mirror in which we cannot see ourselves well because something prevents it; it may be full of dust or fogged up for any other reason. A typical example of these internal obstacles are the five poisons: ignorance, hatred, attachment, envy, and pride. But we will not address the five here, only two: anger and attachment; those are enough for us.

See how you feel when you are angry; observe how anger prevents you from perceiving yourself clearly; observe how there is an absence of clarity when anger is present. There is also an absence of clarity when one has a very strong attachment. Both attachment and anger are internal obstacles. Another very important problem is fear; especially in the West, everyone asks: "What about fear?" Yes, fear is something strong.

On one occasion, I led a retreat on the theme of death, which is currently a very important topic in the West, due to the increased awareness of death. I had everyone think about their own death, and many did not want to; it is possible that you yourself, or you yourself, do not want to think about your own death. It is very difficult to discover the nature of the mind if one does not penetrate or go beyond these fears, if one does not go beyond external, internal, and secret obstacles. The nature of the mind looks very beautiful from afar, but when one approaches these obstacles—for example, fear—at that moment, it would seem that the nature of the mind does not exist. There are two options in this meditation: you can do a deep reflection on your own death, or on a very strong change you have had in your life.

Think about your life. At this moment, you are afraid that it will change: of separation from your partner, of losing your job... The point is to reflect on what

kind of fear you have: to see if you have a really strong fear that dominates your life and permeates your existence to the point that you are living based on that fear. In reality, the nature of the mind is not ahead of fear but behind fear. If we are truly interested in coming into contact with the nature of the mind, perceiving it, we must pass through fear; otherwise, we will not have a real experience of the nature of the mind but an experience fabricated from ideas; this is what happens most of the time.

In your life, you enjoy things: you enjoy food, and you do this despite the fear that is there; you probably have no idea what the experience of all these things would be like if fear were not present. Fear is truly something that permeates or dominates our entire experience.

In the Tibetan tradition, for example, practices like contemplating impermanence are suggested, and some people think: "I don't like doing that practice because I want things to last, I want to stay young forever, I want things to go well forever, I want the world that is familiar to me to remain, and if this practice tells me that it won't be like that, that it won't be forever, it really seems unpleasant to me," and in a way, it is.

In the biographies of great masters, we see that when they discover an aspect of wisdom, generally that discovery does not happen during a party but comes when they are going through a tragedy or a significant loss or much suffering or pain. Often it is in these situations that the truth is discovered, not when one is dancing; I haven't known the latter to happen. It's not that the spiritual path aims to create uncomfortable circumstances, but rather it's about discovering the discomforts that are already within us, and for this, skillful means are used, and circumstances are created for this type of change to occur.

When I reflect on my death or see my death, I relate to the discomfort it causes me and continue to penetrate and reflect more and more deeply, and I enter that fear and reach an extremely dark place; and then, from there, much space opens up, much light arises, and I discover, in this deep reflection on fear, that passing through it allows me to reach the nature of the mind. It's about transcending fear, and this is very important.

Due to karmic circumstances, often in life there is no other option but to discover the nature of the mind through pain and suffering; it is through that contact with profound losses and pains that the spiritual path opens up, and this leads to great realization. There are other people who are not forced in this way, and they spend their entire lives avoiding this fear and live with it constantly. I say they laugh with fear, go to the party with fear, finish the party with fear, and start the next party with the same fear. It is something that is always there, and the same happens with any emotion that obstructs us.

As long as you do not face these internal obstacles, you will not be able to discover the nature of the mind, you will not be able to discover who you really are. Unless you go through this fear and these emotions with practice and strength, it is not possible to discover it, and it is better to do so before circumstances force you to.

I have referred to external obstacles, which are karmic, and internal obstacles, which are thoughts and emotions; now I will address secret obstacles.

Ignorance is one of the secret obstacles. It is also called the "secret demon," and sometimes this idea of the demon is a bit difficult to understand. This expression refers to the fact that ignorance—not recognizing oneself—is the most subtle obstacle (demon) we have. Ignorance is a demon; it is like not recognizing Kuntu Zangpo or not recognizing the Truth or the Light. And this secret demon gives rise to the emotions of fear, attachment, anger, envy: to all internal obstacles. If one has much fear, external obstacles are generated (problems caused by fear); this fear produces external manifestations at the karmic level with relatives, partners, associates, etc. All obstacles are related to each other.

The nature of the mind is the experience of oneself without all these obstacles.

Reconnecting with the nature of the mind or with sacred energy, with sacred sounds, with sacred places, with sacred images, are means to approach your true nature. For example: let's say someone is having difficulties with another person, with their "famous person"—and when I say "famous person," I mean that person in our life who seems to have been born on this earth with the mission of creating problems for us. You probably know who this person is. And why is that person famous? Because they are the first thing that comes to your mind: you wake up in the morning, and without even intending to think about them, they appear; at night, you light your incense, pray, or whatever, and when you fall asleep, they are the first thing that appears in your dreams—that's why they are famous.

What is your reaction to your "famous person"? You are always thinking about how terrible they are, how badly they speak, how badly they do everything. You activate all these negative qualities in yourself and project them onto the person, who is like a screen where you reflect yourself, and as a result, you cannot see anything good in them, nor in the relationship, nor in the process you are in with that person. You cannot see their true nature, nor yours: you project your internal obstacles onto your external obstacles. Imagine changing that and trying to see all the good things that person has; at least, try.

It is beautiful to be in a room full of people and be able to see the space in the room. However, sometimes you can be in a place with 200 people, and what you are doing is seeing if your "famous person" came or not: you are actively looking, you are feeling with your whole body, hearing, because you have the idea that perhaps they were going to come and perhaps they are sitting in the back and you haven't seen them: that person is everything in that room: there is no other

person, no walls, no light, no teachings, but a single person occupies your entire mind. When you can see that, and you realize that if you can do this with your famous person, why can't you do the same with light, with those things that are positive and favorable?

Just as in Mexico City on a certain day cars with license plates ending in a certain number are not allowed to circulate, with the purpose of reducing pollution, imagine what it would be like to think good things about that person for a day. You wake up in the morning, and your "famous person" appears in all their splendor, and you say, "Today is a day when I will discover all the positive qualities of that person." Maybe it's not very easy, but that's your practice. Perhaps you won't find many qualities, but find some, even if the process is very slow. If you need a cup of coffee to find them, drink it; if you need a shot of tequila, drink it: use any resource that can help you discover some positive quality of that famous person, and perhaps after a month, you will have discovered many qualities in them.

Believe what is happening, and thus you will not only begin to discover positive qualities in that person, but you will actually be discovering positive qualities in yourself. You will be discovering within yourself the possibility of finding qualities in your famous person, which is extremely magical, and by doing so, you will come much closer to the nature of the mind: you will be directing your attention toward yourself, toward Dharmakaya, toward the Light.

To connect with the nature of the mind, we use the support of sacred images such as the one representing Kuntu Zangpo or Tapihritsa. What do you see in that image? A naked, luminous being. Remember that an image not only represents something external but is a means to achieve understanding of what is within, to discover the nature of the mind; and when you have these internal realizations, you approach your true nature. The same happens when you discover the positive qualities of your famous person. Certainly, you could adopt the attitude of keeping the famous person in the closet and pretending they don't exist, setting up a beautiful altar, and sitting down to meditate; but in reality, that doesn't work: the first noise or the first phone call will be enough to disturb you.

If we look at an image like Tapihritsa and meditate on that image, at that moment what is happening is that we are having an experience; we are having the experience of what that image represents, which is nakedness: what the image represents is naked awakened consciousness—naked of thoughts such as fears, angers, attachments. When we look at an image like this, we are having that experience of clarity within ourselves; we experience what we see. It is like looking at the sky or contemplating it or meditating on it: we can go to the top of a mountain, and we are perceiving that pure, open, and luminous space that is the sky, and it is not just an experience of something happening externally, because if we can see this open, pure, and luminous space, we are having that experience

within ourselves, and we must recognize that this experience within us counts more than the external experience, because it is discovering ourselves. It is discovering the nature of the mind by remaining with our gaze and mind focused on the sky; it is the same as what happens when we focus on sacred images. The practice of looking at the sky is a way to discover the essence of the space element within oneself.

The Nature of the Mind and the Sound of Seed Syllables

We can discover our true nature within ourselves by relying on images, but also through the practice with the sounds of the seed syllables A, OM, HUNG.

The first seed syllable is A, a white A, and it is a primordial sound that represents the natural state of the mind; or one can say it is an access or a door to the experience of our true nature.

Another way to speak of sounds is to say they are more direct doors leading to that experience. In all cultures, when a discovery is made, people say, "AH!"; it is universal. In meditation, we emit the sound in such a way that it opens the channels, clearing the energy in these channels: subtle thoughts and emotions, and as a result, we perceive openness and discover the secret space, provided there are no overly strong obstacles.

We can have a connection with this sacred experience of the mind simply by being, or through sound, or through images. Images are a bit coarser, sounds are subtler, and simply being is the best. We need images and sounds because we are full of emotions and thoughts that disturb us; but when we have none of these, we need neither images nor sounds because we are in that state of connection with ourselves.

Begin by working with the first syllable, which is the sound A, related to the element of space.

Think of an obstacle you currently have in your life. We all have the three types of obstacles: external, internal, and secret. Choose one that currently causes you suffering and confusion, or that even prevents you from seeing yourself clearly. You may have confusion; but it is more problematic not to know who you are or to be disconnected from yourself. Choose an obstacle that makes you feel this way. It could be an external person, an internal fear, an emotion, or a lack of clarity, or ignorance. Find one that is clear, significant. Now look at the obstacle and try to see the other side: what would be the antidote for that obstacle? For example, if you are very angry with someone, if you have a strong anger that greatly disturbs you and prevents you from flowing in your life, you can then think of love. If what you feel is envy, think of openness; if it is attachment, think of generosity. Try to find the quality that serves as an antidote; only you can find it.

First, do the practice with the sound; later, in the next stage, we will talk about how to meditate with the antidotes you are seeking.

Practice with the Syllable A

Sit in the five-point posture and close your eyes. Focus your attention on the obstacle, on that block you feel, on that emotion: loneliness, fear, lack of will, etc. Connect with the obstacle consciously and try to locate it in your physical body. What images come with this obstacle? What feelings? What energy? Be aware of those places in the body where you feel discomfort or pain that accompanies these emotions or conflicts or is caused by them. Now perceive with great clarity what energy or energies you feel in relation to this conflict. Be aware of how the result of this conflict feels in the mind: if there is a lack of clarity; if there is confusion, simply connect with what happens in the mind when you are connected with the conflict. Emit the sound A. Do it as if you were emitting it from the forehead chakra and sending it into space; along with the sound, all those fears, all the lack of will, all the loneliness, etc., go out into space. Continuously and repeatedly, keep emitting the sound A, perceive these sensations at the physical, energetic, and mental levels; as you emit the sound, open your body, your energy, and your mind so that all tensions and energetic and mental blockages can be released into space, and you feel increasingly clear. The greater the clarity with which you focus on the obstacle, the clearer the connection with it at the three mentioned levels, the more the obstacle is released with the emission of the sound, and the more space is created. What you are doing is connecting with space, as when you use an image or look at the sky on a clear night. Imagine that there are numerous enlightened beings and masters singing the syllable along with you. As you do this, how do you feel? Perhaps you find it difficult to imagine that simply saying A is enough, given that you have many problems; but this is truly something that operates at a very subtle level. Do you have a very clear physical location where conflicts are reflected? Are you trying to make that release? Do you have a very clear energetic sensation related to the conflict? With the mind? Perhaps you have the experience that the conflict is very physically painful, or that it greatly alters your energy, or that it greatly alters you at the mental level.

Remember that you are working with a single obstacle in your life. But how would you feel if you didn't have that obstacle? Imagine the absence of that conflict. Discovering that is getting a little closer to the experience of the nature of the mind.

Could you feel the presence of enlightened beings who were emitting the sound? Yes, they are there, and they are working for you and with you when you connect and produce these sacred sounds; these sounds are working for you and with you at that moment. Then the magic happens, and you say, "Where did the problem go?" It seems the problem is gone, and one might even say it was never there.

The purpose of this first part of the practice is to create space; it is very important to recognize that opening.

For example, a problematic emotion can be loneliness. To some extent, we all feel it from time to time; but there are people who feel it more intensely. Perhaps you perceive that experience of loneliness very clearly, and then you try to avoid it, or approach it. Let's say you decide to approach the experience and start asking yourself: "Why do I feel lonely? What am I lacking? A partner?" But it happens that you find a partner, and then you want to get rid of them. That is probably not the cause of your loneliness, but the point is to enter that experience to discover its cause. In reality, the cause of the feeling of loneliness is not the absence of another person, nor the lack of something; what you lack is connecting with yourself: you are lonely for yourself. If you can feel or know yourself, you don't feel alone; but if you don't know or feel yourself, you need to seek something to substitute for what you feel you lack, and when you obtain those things that can alleviate your loneliness, you still feel it.

I once met a person who had this conflict of feeling lonely and thought their conflict was due to not being comfortable in the city, so they decided to move to the beach. They believed that was the solution, and very excitedly they looked for tables, chairs, carpets, everything perfect for their new home. But although the house and the beach were perfect, the person was not: they felt the same as before. They thought perhaps they would feel better if they changed a table or a window, but the feeling of loneliness persisted, so they said to themselves: "No, it was really a mistake to come to the beach; I should have gone to the mountains, because there is so much fresh air there; the sky is blue and there is no humidity, etc." Then, for two months, they looked for a property in the mountains, fixed it up to their liking, with great care, and the same thing happened: now the same wrong person who had been by the sea was in the right house.

This meditation with the seed syllable A can help us center and focus.

Personally, I don't believe this is the only way to face problems; there are many ways to do it, and different things work for different people. There may be people for whom the sound is enough, there may be others for whom the sound is not enough, and there may be some who feel no connection with the practice.

Earlier, I mentioned the "famous person." Why is that person famous? Because all I know about that person is that they are wrong, and I feel that way and I know it, I tell everyone I know. It's not that just saying "A" during a single practice session makes the "famous person" disappear; but sometimes you tell yourself: "My mind is bad: I shouldn't be thinking this, I shouldn't have conflict with that person, especially if it's my dad or my mom or my husband." You talk more about it with yourself than with your therapist, trying to solve the problem. The more you talk to yourself, the worse the result can be; perhaps talking can be a good solution,

but it is not always so. For some, talking can worsen the situation. The more you talk, the more you reinforce your idea that your famous person is bad. Sometimes what works is to feel and be, what I call connecting directly with the experience you are having. I am not talking about philosophical ideas; I am talking about concrete individual experiences: "That person who causes me conflict—the 'famous person'—has hurt me, and that hurts, and this is something that is happening here and now. When I think of that famous person, everything darkens around me; I don't see anyone laughing, I don't see anyone happy."

All these experiences are real; I don't have to look for them anywhere, nor analyze them, but I have them here. And what do I do then? I connect with this pain, I am feeling it, the famous person caused it, and I even feel it physically. I see my energetic aspect: I feel depressed, dark, I lose my energy, my creativity, my joy, my laughter. I look at my mind, and it is confused; it cannot see beyond.

And when, by doing the practice, I emit the sound A, energetically there is a direct relationship with the seed syllable A: I have the experience, and therefore I have no doubt.

However, I am not saying that this works for everyone in the same way it works for me. That is why I say that these teachings are not for everyone; perhaps it is because they are very easy, and many people like complications; if things are too easy, they don't like them: they like complicated partners—not everyone—but in a way, people seek complexity, and they don't call it complexity but stimulation; but when they are already stimulated, then they think perhaps it wasn't stimulating but complicated.

When a famous person is active and destroys something sacred to you when they become energetically aggressive towards you—if you believe in non-violence, in non-aggression, then do not react with violence. This does not mean you have to be weak: you must show strength so that violence does not approach you. You can be compassionate and thus create more space, but sometimes it is better to simply withdraw. I have had the experience of people behaving that way towards me, and I simply leave. Allow the experience to be, let what is happening happen, but do not do it passively but with strength; let them see that you are not afraid, that you are strong, and that is enough; it is not necessary to destroy them, and yet they can see that you are not afraid. I think in a way it is always useful to have a different response. Someone has to do the right thing, and hopefully, that someone is oneself.

We have said that by practicing with the syllable A, we are creating space. Everyone understands the notion of creating space. If you want to have some space with respect to another person, what do you do? Either you feel the space in your mind and heart, and therefore there is space, or if you don't feel it, you go to another room, or another house, or another city, or another country. The notion of

space ranges from the perspective you have—how you see things—to the geographical notion, a change of country. Sometimes we say, "I need space today"; everyone has experienced this. It is very important to have space, especially when it comes to resolving conflicts both with oneself and with others: space is the first thing.

Practice with the Sounds of the Syllables OM and HUNG

The next stage is to practice with the antidote or what is called quality; that is why I said earlier to look for the antidote to the conflict you are having.

Emit the sound OM from the throat chakra and imagine a red light energy emanating from there; feel that quality and connect with it. For example, if you feel anger, the first thing when emitting the sound A is to allow it to be released; then emit the sound OM, what you are doing is connecting, remembering the quality of love, since this is the antidote to anger: you feel it, you have the real experience of love, and then, when emitting the syllable HUNG from the heart chakra, you activate that quality, give it life, make love something that is truly interacting, that is like a work of art, like music, like a play, like a poem, like an architectural work, like a Stupa*—whatever is necessary for love to have an expression, and that is how that quality is exercised. And if we can exercise it, that is something very powerful for someone living in this conditional world.

We all have love, but it is not always alive, and I sometimes ask:

—Have you told that person you love them? —and they answer: —No. —And why not? —I don't know. —Have you written it to them? —Well, no. —How clearly have you expressed that love, or why haven't you been able to express it? —Because I'm afraid of rejection.

There is another fear there, and it is possible to work with it.

In this tradition, the syllables A, OM, HUNG are considered seed syllables, and we truly believe they are true seeds that have real power; this does not mean that at some point this practice will be useful for everyone: for some, it may have a very rapid and almost magical effect; for others, it may take a long time, and for others, it may never work; but the potential is there, and therefore what we are doing is opening ourselves to that potential. In the body, we have many bad samsaric experiences—that if I hurt here, if I hurt there—but we also have good samsaric experiences. But how often do we have sacred experiences in the body? This is a very important question, and that is why we work with these chakras: because they open the door to sacred experiences in the body, and through this work with the body, we can discover illumination, and therein lies the beauty of having an understanding of the body in its relationship with spiritual development.

Practice with the Syllable OM

Now, bring your attention and focus on the throat chakra, with your body upright, eyes closed, and in the space you had created with the previous sound. Feel the antidote corresponding to the obstacle, whether it is love, kindness, gentleness, compassion, whatever the antidote is for the obstacle, and when you emit the sound OM, imagine that there are many Masters and enlightened beings also emitting this sound, and the power of the sound activates the antidote in such a way that it becomes powerful within you, it becomes very alive. For example: if love is very active and alive within you, there is no room for anger. And so, for every obstacle you have, work with the corresponding antidote. Practice with the Syllable HUNG

When emitting the sound HUNG, connect with the heart chakra and feel and imagine that antidote or quality with which you are connected and which you are feeling at this moment, and allow this antidote to radiate as energy, as light, as sensation, and as feeling towards those people towards whom you feel hatred, envy, or attachment; radiate that love, that openness, that generosity, that compassion towards your famous person or towards the situations you are working with. What you are seeing is a direct path, a very simple perspective: you make the connection with the conflict through the syllable A; then, you connect with the antidote to that obstacle, with the syllable OM, and finally, you radiate it, with the syllable HUNG.

It is a very simple means that has no complications, that we can all do, and that is worth trying; you lose nothing, although it may be that it doesn't work for someone. For it to really work, it is important to understand the principle of what you are doing.

The first thing you do is create space, adequate space. This is sometimes not understood; when you want to resolve something, you start making more mess and filling yourself with more things: you try to resolve it from the analytical mind or from the ideas or emotions you have. What is important here is to create space, however minimal, in relation to the conflict; but after creating that space, it is necessary to use an antidote, because if this is not done, the conflict will return immediately: it is as if we found a thief in the house and kicked them out, but they returned again; if there is a good guard, the thief will probably not return.

And not only must you find the antidote, but you must activate it so that it radiates, and this can be, for example, by sending an email or a letter, making a phone call, or speaking well of your "famous person"; we said that you can practice a whole day of reflection on the qualities of your famous person. This can be very difficult, and possibly at the end of the day, we will have found very few qualities; but then, what do we usually do? Generally, we don't tell anyone that we have discovered good things about the "famous person." Activating would be putting into motion all that energy you cultivated when you connected with those positive qualities, and then you can speak more actively, you can make a call and

say, "Do you remember that famous person I was telling you about? Actually, she's not so bad. Look, I discovered she has these qualities." Probably the person you are talking to will say, "Yes, I already knew that." The point is that you have to activate those qualities, and perhaps what happens next is that your "famous person" calls you and says, "Hello, how are you?" A transformation has occurred, a change has happened. This is the principle we need to understand.

CHAPTER 9

...

THE SEARCH FOR THE NATURE OF THE MIND

If you search for the nature of the mind, you will not find it; if you do not search for it, you will not lose it either. Primordially, it is there, within yourself; it is yours, you are it, and you will never be lost.

Nine Ways to Recognize the Natural Mind

In Dzogchen, the first time the disciple contacts their natural mind in the presence of the Master is called "introduction to the Self" or "introduction to the true nature of the mind"; by "introduction," we mean "direct showing." What does this mean for you? We can have many ideas about what this means, but one thing we all agree on is that it does not refer much to the body but rather to the natural mind, the nature of the mind, the essence of the mind, the aspect of the mind that is beyond all condition.

The text Heart Drops of Dharmakaya* by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen describes nine methods to introduce us directly to the state of the natural mind.

Although you can search for the natural mind in a thousand different ways, the result is always the same: you find nothing. This can also apply to our daily lives when we create a problem. Once, a friend of mine who is a therapist approached his patient with this approach and said: "Let's see, where is your problem? I don't mean where your problem might be, nor how you can create your problem, nor how you can project your problem, nor how you can get hooked on the problem, but where is your problem right now?" And the patient looked up and down, looked at the door and the window, looked at the therapist, at his own body... and replied: "No, right here and now, I don't have a problem." Then the therapist said: "Why can't you always be like this, like now?" That's the idea. But obviously, that's not what usually happens: after a while, you end up in the same problematic

place, and this is always due to having a strong sense of self, to clinging too much to your identity or a situation.

With these nine methods for recognizing the natural mind and thus establishing its nature, you try to realize the illusion you are in, thereby realizing the truth; the truth is that everything is a spectacle, a performance, and you realize that you should not take all that

Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen, Heart Drops of Dharmakaya: Dzogchen Practice of the Bön Tradition. Snow Lion Publications, 2nd ed., Ithaca, New York, 2002. Commentary by Lopon Tenzin Namdak. performance seriously, that it is not true: you observe the spectacle, enjoy it, and let it go, and that is a good way to relate to it. So, our life is like a magician's performance, and we even have an audience. Sometimes we get so involved in the spectacle that we get into trouble; other times, we are able to maintain enough distance, enjoy it, and it does not cause us suffering. The text says: "You search for your mind in nine different ways and do not find it." What does this mean? Is it an achievement or a failure? Are you supposed to find something, or is finding nothing good? And the text continues: "Nine ways to recognize the natural mind through awareness, through remaining, through liberation, and through cutting the root of the mind."

Each of these ways is related to nine qualities and nine experiences.

The first way to search for the nature of the mind: "Recognize its empty nature."

Sit in the five-point posture, relax, and allow thoughts to manifest; they appear, for example, in the form of fear, which seems very real and very solid, and you ask it: "Are you real? Are you real?" See if it has any substance; close your eyes for a moment and try to see if it does. "It seems real: it's causing me problems, but is it real?" That's what you ask yourself internally. Here we are considering the mind in two aspects: one is seeing the fear and recognizing it; the other is experiencing it. It's as if they were two different minds. In the first, the mind is cleaner, healthier, and in the other, more confused. Sometimes we don't see these two distinct aspects; they both become one: it is the mind that is afraid, and then your body is fear, your mind is fear, and your energy is fear—everything is fear. When people get depressed or confused, that's what happens to them. So, it is very important to be able to observe these two aspects of the mind separately.

Continue asking yourself, as you search for it from the soles of your feet to the crown of your head: "Where is the fear?" Look for it in your room, in the bathroom, and you will see that it is not there. Then observe who it is that is searching: you don't find that either. So, what you find is the absence of fear and the absence of the one searching for fear; when you find the absence of both, that is the experience of recognizing the empty nature of the mind. If you search in the mind and ask yourself what fear is and who is seeing the fear, when you find nothing, you are realizing the empty nature of the mind; that is why here it is

about recognizing the nature of the mind through becoming aware of the behavior of the changing mind. When you search and observe like this, the observer and the observed dissolve, and then you find yourself in the vast emptiness or in the vast openness, or in space, or whatever you wish to call it: there is nothing there. This is the recognition of emptiness, of vastness and openness.

The text continues: "Basically, try to recognize its empty nature. There is nothing; it is like the completely empty sky."

When we are in that search and this experience occurs, you realize the un-born, un-originated nature of the mind. I mentioned that each of these nine methods produces nine qualities, nine experiences, and the first of these is seeing the empty nature of the mind: you search and search and find nothing, it is all empty, and when you find that emptiness, you realize the un-originated, un-born nature of the mind. Basically, in this search, there are three aspects:

The process during which you are searching. The result you are not finding, in whose place you find openness. And once you have found the openness, the recognition of the un-born, un-originated nature; you can also call it the recognition of the immutable essence. The greatest experience of fearlessness comes from that place. The maximum experience of indestructibility comes from that recognition.

This is the first way to search for the mind. Contemplate it for a moment.

The second way to search for the nature of the mind is called "the search for vision /nang wa*]." The text says: "Analyzing the appearance or searching for the appearance." Between this way and the first, there is a sequence. You searched, for example, for your fear in an experience of your life: you searched and searched and found nothing, and you had a certain realization, a certain confidence that it was not there, and you were left with the absence of fear, or with the presence of the space of the absence of fear, or simply with the presence of space. Can you destroy what you did not find? Can you get rid of it? Can you get out of it? Can you move away from it?

Return to that place where you found nothing. Return to that place where you could see and find nothing and remain there. You could not find anything, only vastness and openness. Can you destroy what you cannot find? Can you renounce it? Can you go beyond it? Can you be separated from it? Can you be apart from that space? Can you destroy that space? Try it. When you try, you realize that you cannot destroy it, you cannot renounce it, you cannot move away from it; it simply is, open and clear. That clarity is called "the incessant quality," "the incessant nature." "Incessant" means it is always, without ceasing.

Imagine all this that I have said: can you get out of it? Can you get out of that space? No. Can you get out of it as if you were leaving a house? Can you get rid of space? No. Nothing can destroy it, nothing can stop it, nor halt it. What is there is clean, clear, indestructible presence. If you don't believe it is indestructible, try to destroy it, try to get out of it; the only way to know it is indestructible is to try to destroy it.

Thus, when you realize that it is indestructible, you also realize that it is immutable and that it appears as an experience, not as an object but as a clear experience in which presence flows. For example: when you see your "famous person," what appears? Anger appears, fear appears. When you see a loved one, joy, love appears. Here, in space, clarity appears—not necessarily experiences of joy or sadness—and that is called "establishing the incessant nature of the mind." This is called "the search for vision," and the search for vision is discovering the incessant nature.

Recognizing the incessant nature of the mind grants much life, much fullness, and perfection; any sense of lack is overcome through this experience, through this recognition.

To be able to recognize these nine methods, you ask yourself different questions. The text says that the search for emptiness is the first. The search for appearance or vision (nang wa) is the second. First is the experience of immutability, incessant immutability, and then one experiences the incessant nature through the immutable. First, you have the experience of emptiness, and from that experience, you experience immutability; second, you experience the incessant nature. Thus, the immutable is incessant, and the incessant is immutable.

When you realize the immutable quality, there is no longer fear, no doubt; when you realize the incessant aspect, you are complete.

We all know the experiences of samsara and know that many things happen in samsara, but somehow, amidst all these things that happen, there is a place that seems not to be changing at all; there is a continuum of that space and that being. Let's put it this way: there is a sense of self beyond what you do, beyond your sex, beyond your belief, beyond your profession, beyond the role you play. Family roles, such as father, mother, brother, sister, are very important, and in certain cultures, professional roles are also important. Here, the point is to search if there is a sense of being that is beyond that—something that does not change and is beyond all roles—or if you are one of these, meaning if you change like the roles you play: you are a mother, and one day your children grow up, and you still want to be their mother as you were before, but they no longer want you to be. Or you have a profession, and one day that changes, you get tired of doing the same job for thirty years, and then you change completely. Throughout life, we change roles again and again, so we all change. Change is incessant, but it is not the best

expression of the incessant; the best is what I mentioned earlier: flow, presence, light. Changing experiences are the coarsest level of the incessant.

Do you ever stop experiencing something? No, you never stop experiencing something. If you are awake, you are experiencing something; if you are tired, you are experiencing something; even if you are asleep, you are experiencing something; when you are preparing to die, you are experiencing; when you are dead, you are experiencing something. Everything is experience, so experience is incessant. That is why we say: "Do not cling to an experience, because you are greater than that, you are older than that, you are better than that, so do not stay there too long." That is the incessant.

And this truly gives you a sense of freedom. Your point of view changes from very narrow to very broad, your perspective [ta wa*] expands, and every time your perspective expands, you are more exposed to space, and the more you are exposed to space, the more you are exposed to light, and the more you are exposed to light, the more you are exposed to the incessant.

The Tibetan expression lhun drup means "spontaneous perfection." In the experience of the basis (kunzhi), this does not necessarily mean that joy, for example, is active; but joy is perfected there, joy is there. A person who perfects themselves in joy realizes the perfection of joy within themselves. The person is sleeping, and when they wake up in the morning and see the sunlight, they immediately feel joy; they hear the bird's song and immediately feel joy, they see children playing and immediately feel joy: they have so many reasons to feel joy! Why? Because perfection is not blocked. If nothing happened, perhaps that experience would not be so intense and manifest, but it is there. It is more of an internal joy than an expressed joy. The joy that is expressed arises when the circumstances are there. Conversely, a person who is completely blocked wakes up in the morning and doesn't even notice that the sun is shining, doesn't even notice that children are playing, doesn't even hear that the bird exists or is singing. What's more: if they hear the bird sing, they might perceive that what they hear as the "noise" of the bird, the "noise" of the children, and all of it becomes disturbances that prevent them from sleeping. That is what manifests, that is the feeling when there is a blockage. The person does not feel free, is suffering internally, and feels there are reasons to label their experience. It is surprising how we can always find ways to have problems. If you are left in a completely empty room, you will find a problem there, and if you are left in a room full of things, you will also find a problem.

The third way to search for the nature of the mind: "The incessant nature within the immutable nature." Basically, the text says that you are experiencing both qualities of nature in one, that in reality there is no separation between them. Depending on your perspective, you formulate questions, and it seems they are two different natures, but ultimately they are the same. There are different ways

to arrive at the truth, and these depend on your own conditions: the first is from emptiness; the second, from appearance; and the third, from appearance within emptiness. These three are very important.

I would like to clarify the terms "incessant" and "immutable" a bit more. I often give the example of a Tibetan king who was beaten and tortured during the revolution. At first, he was very afraid because he didn't want to be killed, he didn't want an eye removed, he didn't want his teeth broken or his bones shattered; he was constantly protecting himself from fear. Yet, they continued to torture him no matter how much he feared; his torturers did not respect him, perhaps his fear made them enjoy it more. So, little by little, he lost more and more hair, more and more teeth. What he tried to protect were all the impermanent things of his body. He realized that it was impossible to protect them; his torturers were very violent and had no compassion. One day, they beat him so badly that he said, "Okay, do whatever you want to me," and he felt a great liberation deep within his being. They could kill him, and he felt free from them because he could only die once, and there was no point in protecting his hair, nor his beautiful teeth for smiling. He had nothing left, so he finally stopped clinging to what continuously changes. What he discovered is that within him there was something indestructible, something that was beyond the head, bones, and teeth. He had a glimpse of that indestructible quality, and that was his realization, that was his liberation: he was free from his body and free from those people. That sense of being is very important. That sense of being is what Kuntu Zangpo means, it is what the inner Buddha means, it is what the nature of the mind means. In many spiritual traditions, they speak of the indestructible: that is the indestructible.

You can see that there is no separation between the incessant nature and the insubstantial emptiness or openness. It is like light in a clean, clear sky: the sky is immutable, it is open, and the light is incessant, unobscured; there is no separation between light and space, there is no separation between the immutable nature and the incessant nature.

Try to rest there, in the essence.

Reflect on the search for the self. Imagine for a moment the sense of self: how difficult it is to protect it, maintain it, defend it, satisfy its desires; it needs so much! It wants so much...! Reflect a little on this: it is exhausting. Simply realize how exhausting it is and try to understand who this self is; reflect within yourself and remain there.

Now, do not analyze, observe directly: you find nothing; you only find space, you find openness. Simply recognize and connect with this unlimited, infinite,

boundless openness; simply recognize this space. As I said, this is like the encounter with Dharmakaya, with Kuntu Zangpo.

Inquire if you can destroy this openness, this essence, or renounce it, or move away from it, or not be it. Simply see if this is possible and maintain the experience. Realize that you cannot destroy it, renounce it, change it. That which you cannot destroy is clean and clear, without obscurations. That which you cannot destroy is clearly present, clearly conscious. Recognize this clear awakened consciousness, observe its incessant nature. It is rigpa. Simply recognize that this incessant nature and this immutable essence are inseparable. This openness and this awakened consciousness are inseparable. Openness is awakened consciousness. Awakened consciousness is openness. The immutable is incessant. The incessant is immutable.

The term "open awakened consciousness" sounds very simple, and to some extent, everyone knows what it means; but in a deeper sense, people do not know what it is. Let's look, for example, at the word "openness." In common language, everyone refers to openness in relation to something: "I am opening up to others," "I am opening up to my partner," "I am opening up to this situation, because every time I close myself off in my relationship, I have problems." Generally, what one means is: "I want to open up to others, to my friends." But that has nothing to do with the openness I am referring to here; here I am referring to discovering this openness that already exists within oneself. This openness, this space, is the space we call Dharmakaya, the space we can refer to as the essence, the space we can refer to as immutable: the space where we can discover maximum power, where there is no sense of fear. This is the space we discover.

"Discovering space" sounds good. Sometimes people use the term "discovering emptiness," and when we say "discovering emptiness," it can seem like a contradiction; that's why we are trying to clarify by saying: "Who is looking? Who is recognizing the nature that is immutable?" And the answer is: the incessant nature is what recognizes the essence that is immutable.

And once you discover and understand the incessant nature, you recognize that there is no separation between the immutable essence and the incessant nature. Nirmanakaya manifests from this inseparable state.

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The experience of the "immutable essence" is Dharmakaya, the experience of the incessant nature is Sambhogakaya, and the experience of their inseparability is Nirmanakaya.

This would be the best way to carry out what we call direct observation. Instead of analyzing and analyzing the analyzer, we observe directly. For example, in your experience: do you feel absence of fear when I say "immutable essence"? When you have a very direct connection with this, you feel free from fear. When you do not have this connection and there are many external changes, that can become frightening; likewise, emotions are so changeable that they become frightening. And if you observe your thoughts, you see that they are continuously changing, and this causes fear. But if you are in the space where the observer and the observed have dissolved, what some would call "the encounter with God" occurs. It is the encounter with Dharmakaya. What obscures us is thought. Here, the point is not to cling to thought, but to observe directly. Direct observation is when conceptual mind does not intervene.

In Dzogchen, when we speak of going to the source, to the origin, we are talking about these experiences: the immutable essence, the incessant nature, and the inseparability of both. Any means—intellectual means, conceptual means—is a secondary means. In the teachings, the example is given of washing hands with blood when they are stained with blood: this refers to trying to solve a problem created by the mind by using the mind that created the problem. The mind that creates problems only knows how to create problems; it can create a new one, but

just because it is new, it does not cease to be a problem. So, to be able to solve that problem, you have to go to the root of the mind, to the

base of the mind; that means reaching the place of pure awakened consciousness. What does “pure awakened consciousness” mean? Pure awakened consciousness means the awakened consciousness of Being: that is where you have to arrive.

Sometimes, when you have a lot of confusion in your mind, you get into more confusion in your attempt to clarify the first, and when you are confused, you might talk to another confused person, and perhaps you think that doing so will help you; but it hardly will. What you can do then is to rest in your true nature. Of course, you have to have enough strength to be able to do so. Once you are capable of doing it, you are resting in a beautiful place.

Commonly, we are in a very fragile place. As I said before, the self needs a lot, wants a lot, needs to defend itself a lot, protect itself a lot. In a way, it is exhausting: it requires a lot of “maintenance,” and this exhausts you, exhausts others, exhausts a group, a country, the entire world. All this is required to maintain the self. Why is so much maintenance required? Because we believe there is a self there, and we believe that that self really needs all that maintenance. But the truth is that the self does not exist and does not need to be maintained. Trying to understand this requires a little effort. How many times in our lives do we stop to think about it? We are not accustomed to doing so; what we do is talk to the self in this way: “What do you need? Ah! I know what you need. I am trying to get it for you, but these people are very problematic, they are becoming an obstacle, and yet, we will get it.” We converse with the self in that manner. But if for a moment you rest from this and are able to find a deep, very

peaceful place, free from conditioning—and therein lies the famous openness—that is what is called direct observation. When I say that the experience of the absence of fear arises from there, it is very true. The reason we fear is that the self fears change; if something changes, we do not think something is changing, we think we are changing: “I am changing, my essence is changing, my being is changing, and I do not want to change, so I am afraid.” But when you know that the natural mind is immutable and you already know it, there is nothing that changes. The circumstances around me may change, but my essence does not change. The more you have this knowledge and the more you discover it, the more confidence, power, and flexibility you will have. That is the power of this openness.

Remember this word: “openness”; it is a very simple word. You can say: “I am experiencing openness in my being,” and that means: I feel openness within me; I

am openness, openness is me. And if you remain more in yourself in this openness, you are in a very powerful place. But if you are not there, you might say: “I am opening myself, I am trying to feel openness.” And what does that mean? That in this case, openness is nothing more than a word; rather, it means there is a blockage; it means: “I still don’t feel that openness, so I am working to achieve it.” Then you turn your gaze to more specific things and say: “I want to feel openness in this situation.” When you say that, you are referring to something very specific, for example: “This person said something to me,” or “this person did something to me,” or “this person is planning to do something to me, but I still want to feel openness towards them.” That means you are not open, that you find it difficult to open up, that it hurts you to do so. And if you look for the one who is hurting, then the whole process begins: you discover that the one who is hurting is not really there; it is not in that pure place, in that pure Being. Somehow, you realize that all these fears and this Samsara have created a self—a sense of self—that does not really exist, or at least not in a real sense; so you inquire who the self is and carry out the same process, going deeper. In Dzogchen, it is always about seeking the subject, rather than the object.

In Sutra, it is about understanding the emptiness of reality, the emptiness of the object. Here, we are rather trying to discover the emptiness of the subject. The subject is the one who is creating everything. I don’t know to what extent you are understanding or experiencing this; but it is recommended that at every moment in your life you try to reflect on it. To some extent, a somewhat analytical approach intervenes here. But apply it in this way, and the analytical mind will stop, and then you can rest in your true nature.

Use your analytical mind for a moment, like a person who needs to use a cane to get up, but not to walk. Use your conceptual mind to connect with yourself, but do not cling to it.

In Dzogchen teachings, it is said: “Observe, dissolve, and continue.” Another way of saying it would be: “Remain, dissolve, and continue.” Och means to remain, chik means to dissolve, and chang means to continue. What does this mean? First, you find yourself in your true nature or in the natural state. Then a thought arises that has the potential to interfere with awakened consciousness; then you observe: when you observe, the observer and the observed dissolve. That is called “dissolution,” and what follows is called “continuation,” until this continuation becomes remaining again. A thought arises again, an interference, and this cycle repeats continuously. As long as this cycle continues to repeat, you remain a practitioner.

Imagine that one day you sit down to meditate and you see that there is nothing left to dissolve. What do you find? Nothing remains but “remaining,” continuing to remain; there is no dissolution, you do not have to dissolve anything, thoughts simply come and go, they do not prevent you from remaining in the natural state.

That is the day you have been waiting for: the day when thoughts are like flowers and every experience is like an ornament. What do the flower and the ornament mean? They mean that there are no longer any disturbances. An ornament is not something that disturbs.

Recapping: the first method for seeking the nature of the mind leads you to find emptiness; the second leads to remaining in the natural state without being distracted by appearances (visions, forms, sensations that arise); and the third, to appearance in emptiness. These three are very important.

In meditation, we say: “Looking inward and searching,” and the fact that we find nothing is what establishes the unoriginated, unborn nature, emptiness. When you search for the subject and the object, you find nothing; but that does not mean you have found the absence of everything. You did not find what you were looking for, because it is clear that what you found was that you found nothing. But instead, you found something much more valuable than what you were looking for, so you can say to yourself: “I can see everything, but I find nothing; I have everything, but I cling to nothing.”

These first three ways of seeking the mind are the main ones; the other six are various aspects of them.

The fourth way of seeking the nature of the mind refers to the incessant manifestation of visions or appearances [nang wa]. These visions or appearances have no inherent existence, but at this moment they appear clearly before you; they are deceptive visions, samsaric visions; they are not really there, they are like the object of a dream. If they were really there instead of being like the object of a dream, then you should be able to find them when you look for them. The reason you do not find them is because they are not there. Philosophically speaking, you are trying to dissolve things, to deconstruct them. The theory of deconstruction is basically nihilistic and says: “There is nothing, period.”

In Dzogchen teachings, it is not like that; what it says is that “there is clarity”; it is not that there is nothing, there is clarity, but you find nothing. Western nihilistic theory says that if something is there, I should find it, and since I cannot find anything, then there is nothing. There are many realities that we have not yet perceived. The reality we perceive is based on our conditioning; that is why we say these visions are samsaric visions.

I always give this example of the mal-la. Collectively, we can all call it mal-la, but other people may not see it as mal-la; perhaps they see it as a necklace; perhaps it is not so elegant, but they see it as something to wear to go out to dinner. We, collectively, can call it mal-la; but then I have my personal vision, which I add to it, and I say: “It is my mal-la,” and that is my “pure vision.” It is like saying: “This is

my mal-la, and no one else can share it, and if someone wears it, we are going to have a problem." And this is a "personal vision"; in this mal-la, there is nothing of me, but when I see this mal-la, what I see is that it is mine; that part of me that sees it as mine is the basis of my problems; the problem is not in the mal-la, and this is what we refer to when we say that visions are deceptive.

A deceptive vision is like the object of a dream: in dreams, I see the object, and it has an effect on me, but if I try to grasp it, I cannot.

An example of this would be "my famous person." How many "famous people" do we have? And how many "famous people" are we planning to have? It is incessant. You already know so many "famous people" that when you see one of them, you say: "You are not a big deal; I have many more, you are no longer that important. Incessantly, I have incessant 'famous people,' and at any moment I can create famous people."

I have given the example of projected images: when you show a slide, there is a projector, there is electricity, there is the bulb, there is the lens, and the screen. The white screen is like the basis of consciousness; the bulb is like the light, the lens is like the self, and the slide is like karma, karmic imprints, karmic conditions. We are only capable of creating the "famous person" because of our karma. If we did not have enough karma, we would not create the "famous person." It takes a lot of karma to create many "famous people." For example: start with your first famous person; put it (as if it were a slide) in the light, and then it will be projected outward, and you will see it on the screen. What we see on the screen is called nang wa, incessant vision. We continuously see many slides in our lives. When you remove the slide, what

do you see on the screen? Light. You put the slide back, and what do you see? The "famous person": light, famous person, light, famous person... And now, what do you see? Perhaps only light.

Sometimes it takes time to create "famous people"; there are very skillful people who can create them instantaneously, others need more time. Once you place the slide and see the "famous person," what do you really see there? You see incessant light. What you see is light, colors: dark or light green, red, etc. There is a lot of light, but in that light, you have projected something; you call it "famous person," and it is bothering you. But what is really there is light, a combination of colored lights. If you look at the slide and see it in a certain way, you see that it is light, it is a different light, which is creating a certain image: an image that you have projected as your "famous person," your enemy. So there are clearly two places from which you can see, and depending on where you look, you will see light or your enemy. How can you manage to see more light, instead of seeing your enemy? You have to take the image out for a moment, and then what do you see?

You see light. And when you put the image back, you will realize that it is the same light, but it is as if it has manifested and filtered through different colored lights; however, it is the same light, it is the same base.

So, if you are connected to the base [kunzhi], you no longer see your “famous person” there: you see light. If you forget the light of the base and only see the image, you are more likely to keep recreating your “famous person.” This is how it happens in life. You can see everything as light, or you can see it as “famous people” or as your “famous situations.”

How can you have more connection with this light? By having more connection with yourself. Do not seek your Being in the external;

Feel the power within, instead of seeking externally. Feel the joy, the happiness within, instead of seeking them externally. Feel that you have within yourself all those qualities you seek outside: you are the embodiment of those qualities. Feel yourself as Shenla Odkar, who is the embodiment of the six antidotes.

That is the real, complete, perfect way of being. Sometimes you find great support externally: you find a wonderful reason to be happy, and that is great; you are happy and have a good reason to be happy. What do you need to discover? That this same happiness is already within you, that it does not depend on the external. This recognition reinforces the existence of inner happiness, and that helps: it is a great way to grow.

All the wonderful experiences you have externally help you to grow. Are you happy today? That means you are happy, happiness is not outside. It is like when you meditate and say to yourself: “This is a beautiful experience!” Where does this come from? It is something of yours, it is not mine; it does not belong to the place; it is not due to the situation: it is yours, it is within you, and you can have it always. The circumstances that have allowed you to have these experiences are showing you that this is within you, and you can always find that place whenever, wherever, and however: that is the beauty of it. But if you try to condition it, if you say: “I need a Master to have this experience,” or “I need

The antidote to anger and hatred is unconditional love; to greed, generosity; to ignorance, wisdom; to envy and jealousy, openness; to pride, peace; and to complacent laziness, compassion. THE QUEST FOR THE NATURE OF MIND »+» 91

my practice book to have this,” or “I need to be at the retreat center in Valle de Bravo to feel this,” then you will have the experience very rarely, because it is not very common for all these conditions to come together.

When you are in space, awakening is the recognition of the spontaneously perfect, spontaneous perfection. The concept of spontaneous perfection, in Tibetan lhun drup, means that all the happiness in the world is within you. Can you imagine it?

All the happiness in the world is within you, only there, and it is waiting for you; just turn your face a little: you will almost see it; a little more, and the moment you turn, you will discover it. It is waiting for you there; it's just that you are not looking in the right direction: the wrong direction is outward, the right direction is inward; the wrong direction is towards form, and the right direction is towards the natural mind. The closer you see your natural mind, the more direct the path will be. The more you see matter, the longer the path will be. The more you see conceptual mind, the longer the path will be, and the more you see the senses, the shorter the path will be; the more you see your innate awakened consciousness, your incessant nature, the more direct the path will be.

Incessant vision, incessant appearance, incessant energy, is always manifesting, but you cannot catch it; it is always there, but you cannot reach it.

Why do you want to catch it? Because there is a desire to possess it, because you believe you are that appearance. It is like a sensation; we don't literally say it like that, but we feel it: "That is me," and when you lose it, you feel you lose yourself. If you identify with someone, when you lose that person, you feel you lose yourself. Why do you feel you

lose yourself? Because you have identified. We do this with many things.

In a way, it is like the sense of fullness—there is so much there!: beautiful mountains, the garden, the river... You can feel very full with everything in life, or you can feel that there is nothing in it. We have the famous example of the glass half full or half empty; some people choose to look at the half-empty part (although perhaps it is not true that they choose it, perhaps they have been conditioned to see the empty part), and other people choose and try to see the full part, and there are other realized people who do not see the empty part, they only see that it is nonexistent, and that is life: experience depends on the level of realization.

When you practice following this method, even if visions appear, your understanding is different: you see that all visions are an illusion and you "realize the nature of the illusion that does not stop."

The fifth way of seeking the nature of the mind is: "Seeking where the reflections come from." If there is no mind, who is seeing the vision? Who is labeling it? Who is experiencing pleasure or pain? In the text Drops of the Heart of Dharmakaya, it is said: "If you look back at the state of the mind, you will see that everything is made by the mind. But if you look at the mind, you will see that the mind also does not seem to have independent existence. If the mind is not there, then who has given names to things and created the causes of existence? Therefore, the

mind must exist, and everything else exists in dependence on the mind. Nothing exists independently of the mind.

Nothing exists beyond the natural state. The earth is not independent of the natural state; the stone is not independent of the natural state; visions are not independent visions. Everything is a vision [nang wa] that arises in the natural state.

The natural state is like a single point; the natural state is like the place where birds fly without leaving a trace. If you understand this, you will realize that the natural state is the creator of all things: it is the king of creators."

In the Nyingma tradition, there is a famous Tantra that says this: "The king who makes everything happen; the king of creation, which is the natural state, is kunzhi gyalpo." The mind creates everything: if you are very happy, it is your mind; if you are very sad, it is your mind; if you are depressed, it is your mind; if you are excited, it is your mind; if you feel lost, it is your mind; if you believe you have discovered something very great, it is your mind; if you believe you are full of ignorance, it is your mind. There is nothing but the mind, which is capable of playing many roles and having many experiences.

The natural mind is like a mirror. If a beautiful person passes in front of it, it is a reflection in the mirror; if an ugly person passes, it is another reflection in the mirror; if a person passes by complaining a lot, it is just the reflection in the mirror; if they pass by saying everything is wonderful, it is the reflection in the mirror. You can talk for a hundred years in front of the mirror, and the mirror will never say anything to you, it will not say: "Ah, what wonderful discussions you are having here!" nor "you are talking a lot of nonsense." But you have many opportunities to judge yourself, as people usually do. For example, in the morning, the first thing you do is get up; then you see yourself as a ghost; you spend a lot of time fixing yourself up to look like a deity, and then you say: "This is an acceptable deity," and you go out into the street. The mirror never said anything. The mirror did not say: "You look bad," nor did it say: "Now you look good," but you can talk to yourself in the mirror. The same happens with the mind:

—I am happy. —Well, you are happy. —I am sad. —Fine, you are sad.

In a way, that happiness, or that sadness, is just the mind. You can have many experiences, but without being affected by them, and that would be our goal.

Imagine you have a camera, a mirror, and a very clear glass, and in front of these three things is a little monkey. What does the camera do? You click... and the camera captures the exact image. And what does the mirror do? It reflects the image, but it does not capture it like the camera. If you take another photo with the camera without advancing the film, what happens? How will the monkey look? The image will be confused. The more superimposed photos you take, the

more confused the image will be. Just as the image becomes very confused, we become confused when we see many things, hear many things, or have too many experiences without being able to process everything we receive; our mind becomes like a very defective camera. And what happens with the mirror? At every moment, every image that appears there, that is reflected there, is fresh, it does not mix with any other. And with the glass? There are no images there; through the glass, you can see the image that is behind it; there is space, and that is a different quality.

When you discover something conceptually, you are like the camera taking a photo: “Ah! I realized something.” But do not try to realize the same thing too many times, because the photo would be very confused. You have to be like the mirror: every time an image arises, that image has the potential to be erased. If you are a camera, you can say “PE!” 1000 times until your throat is sore, and the image will still be there anyway. So, you have to be like a mirror, or like glass, as you go through the process.

Awakened consciousness is like the mirror or the glass. When you are able to be like the glass or the mirror, you have good and bad experiences in life, but the experiences leave no trace on you; the mirror does not cling, and if nothing remains there, there is nothing that will affect you in the future: the mirror is ready and fresh for the new image, you are ready and fresh for the new experience.

It is not a problem “to have a problem”; the problem is to get stuck in it. Have as many problems as you want, but move on, do not get stuck in them; let them go, do not cling to them. Look at your clear and unclouded mind; the mind is clear, the problem is just passing through, think about that: the mind is unclouded. The problem is just a guest, but sometimes guests become bigger than yourself: you get hooked on what is passing through; but that is not what you really want. Do you want to be like the mirror? Do you want to remain more in your clear and unclouded mind? The nature of the mind is clear light; simply be that at all times.

Looking at the sky helps, looking at the light helps, looking at smiling people helps. So look in the right places, stay in the right places, look at the right people at the right time; avoid the wrong places, the wrong times, the wrong people, because if you are with the wrong people and in the wrong places and at the wrong time, it does not help you.

The sixth way of seeking the nature of the mind refers to the fact that “the nature of the mind cannot be thought, let alone be expressed in words. When you understand this, you recognize the natural state without thinking or speaking.”

The text Drops of the Heart of Dharmakaya says: “It could be said that if the natural state exists, then it must appear somewhere; but [when it is sought] nothing appears, therefore the natural state does not exist. It always is, leaving no trace in the past, present, or future. But even though the natural state does not appear, it is always there. This awakened consciousness is such that it can never be apprehended by thought, nor can it be named or shown in writing. If you try to show it through sounds or signs, you never arrive exactly at the nature of this awakened consciousness.”

The text continues: “It is like the experience of a mute person tasting sugar”; they are able to taste it, but cannot express it. And it is not that it tastes less to them than to us, they taste it the same; but they do not have the words to express that taste and do not feel the need to do so, it is enough for them to taste it; it is not like us: if we have an experience, we want everyone to know about it.

It is interesting to reflect on this: why do we have to talk about our experiences? And it is not just that we have to talk about them, talking is just the beginning; moreover, we want to label them: “It’s a good dream,” “it’s a bad dream,” “do I need to do something about it, or should I not worry about it? Please, answer me.” This is what we want. The purpose of the talk is to get an answer; you want someone, no matter who, to tell you: “Oh, yes, how great! It was a fantastic dream!” Some people are content with that answer; but some other unfortunate ones are not satisfied with that answer and wonder: “Why did I get a good dream?” And why not? Or: “Why did my wife have that kind of dream?” or “My husband never has those kinds of dreams, why me? Why do I deserve it?” Of course, this seems amazing to me; those people can continue the conversation indefinitely, and sometimes I wish I could change the channel in another direction, and if I did, perhaps then they would say: “My husband had such an experience; why didn’t I?” It is always this question of asking: “Why did I have such an experience, or why didn’t I have it?” The basic problem has nothing to do with whether the experience is good or bad. In Dzogchen, it is said: “A good thought or a bad thought is the same: get rid of it.” Get rid of confusion, of clinging to thought, and rest in the clear, unclouded space...

Here we are referring to the experience of the mute person and the sugar. When you have an experience and feel that you do not need to express it, you should feel happy about it. When you have an experience and feel that you need to talk about it, then remain conscious of this: guide it well, make it shorter, and conclude it as soon as possible. That would be the best way to express it.

When expressions are linked to energy, they have an impersonal quality. And if they are linked to emotions or the body, then they have more to do with personality.

Let us consider, for example, the concept of karma in Buddhism. Frequently, people believe in karma intensely; many of those people are ordinary people, who may not know or understand much, but they believe a lot in karma: karma is not a person, it is not male or female. If a Tibetan Buddhist, for example, has an accident, they will say: “Ah, it’s my karma!” In the West, on the other hand, many people would ask: “Whose karma is it?” (When I say: “It’s my karma,” this event is the result of a process that occurs through impersonal experiences, and one does not have to talk to anyone: it is karma.) Or, you can say: “Ah, I had an accident,” and the first thought is: “Whose fault is it?” and then you are not thinking about karma: “There are only two people here, and of course, it’s not my fault, it’s the other person’s, and I’m figuring out how to make sure it’s not my fault.” This is called personalizing the problem. It is as if you cannot process the problem unless you attribute it to others or to yourself.

It seems that we often do that. In cultures where karma is believed in, the problem does not have to be yours or mine, it can be ours. It is our karma, or it is Samsara. The problem exists, and it should not be given too much importance. We tend to make more of a problem out of the problem than it actually is.

The seventh way of seeking the nature of the mind. The text says: “The natural state does not exist in the material world.” The mind does not exist, it is not something you can catch, but it is not nonexistent because you cannot get rid of it. Or can you get rid of your mind? You can get out of a particular state of mind, but not out of the nature of the mind; so—I repeat—it does not exist because you cannot catch it, but it is not nonexistent either, because you cannot get rid of it. It is neither, because it is beyond existence and nonexistence.

This is paradoxical: the mind is nonexistent, because you cannot find it, because Buddha did not see it; the mind is not nonexistent, because you cannot lose it. Existence and nonexistence imply a clear sense of duality. In Buddhist epistemology, it is said: either it is existent or it is not; there is nothing intermediate between existence and nonexistence, a thing cannot be both existent and nonexistent at the same time.

In Dzogchen, it is not said that something is both existent and nonexistent at the same time: it is said that it is beyond existence or nonexistence. What does this mean? The existent and the nonexistent have to do with the subject and the object. The existent only exists because there is someone to perceive it. Something cannot exist without someone to perceive it. When there is someone to perceive it, there is a self. In the experience I am referring to here, there is no one to perceive. So there is no existence.

It is like realization that is beyond any elaboration: “the great unlimited mind, beyond any elaboration.” This is the seventh way.

The eighth way of seeking the nature of the mind says: “To the natural state, what do you call it? Is it important to name it? Is it necessary to name it?” For the conceptual mind, yes, it is. When we are named in a certain way, we are affected by how we are named. That is one of the greatest human conditionings, one of the most weakening, from childhood to adulthood. If, when you are a child, they tell you: “You are stupid,” you think: “I am stupid, I will develop my stupidity, and when I grow up, I will give you back all my stupid behavior.” That is what parents sometimes do: they name the child in this way, affecting them so much that when they become adolescents, they really behave stupidly.

Thus, parents have put a certain label on their children, and later the children manifest it. The point here is that when we are named in a certain way, we are affected by how we were named. The same applies to so-called certificates (your license, your degree): you are a doctor, you are a lawyer, you are a judge. All those labels we consider important. And what is said at this point is that they are not.

You can name anything, but no name will affect that which is. The only reason you name something is for you to understand it, not for it to become better or worse. As long as you require a name, have it. When you no longer need it, you can free yourself from it.

The text says: “When you understand this, you realize the nameless mind that is beyond thoughts.”

Denominations are created by thoughts: thoughts and denominations are related; if there were no thoughts, there would probably be fewer denominations.

Once, someone came to see me and said: “I have a serious problem, I have OCD.” I didn’t know what that was and asked: “What is that?” “It’s Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.” “So, what do you do?” I asked, and he replied: “I have to wash my hands, I have to bathe.” I said: “That’s great! If you touch anything, it’s good to wash, and it’s good to be clean.” He replied: “No, no! It’s that I wash too much.” And I told him: “That’s fine, you are cleaner than other people; there are people who don’t wash, who don’t even remember to wash, and they feel very comfortable.” I am not saying that all this cannot be a problem, but sometimes the way we label is the problem. In this case, this person is not saying that they bathe all day: they put a label on it and attribute it to themselves, and this becomes a problem, because by labeling it as a problem, they stabilize it as such, confirm it, reinforce it, seal it, and make it stronger and stronger. Their need for cleanliness is like our need to sleep, to eat, to rest: we cannot call it a problem. Basically, what I am saying here is that the problem lies in labeling.

This eighth point speaks of thought and words, and in Dzogchen, thought is something you always try to overcome; thought is what says, “Yes, it exists,” or “it does not exist,” or “it is in between.” That is why the text says: “Beyond thoughts and expression.”

So, what are you going to call that mind? It is not like the object of thoughts, so there is no way you can really call it; it is exhausted in the unnamable. You cannot demonstrate it with examples. So, how do you demonstrate it? The mind simply looks at itself instead of being seen through a name or through examples: it looks at itself directly. Saying "I experience it but I don't know what to call it" is good; if you don't know what to call it, that's good. So you shouldn't ask yourself what you should call it. When you experience something, you want to know what it is. Everyone asks questions: "I experienced this, what was it?" Generally, you mean: "Was it good, or bad? Should I leave it as it is, or should I not worry about it?" Those are the typical questions. It is difficult to leave the experience as it is.

Sometimes you say: "I don't feel very well, I feel tired," and that's fine. But what do you do with it? You say: "What's wrong with me? What problem do I have?" and you ask others: "Do you feel the same as me? Do we all feel the same? Is it the weather? Is it the energy of the place? Is it the teaching?" Again, we find ourselves in the same situation: we want to know. And the point is that you will not know why it is so, because you will not find any answer, but you will be quite busy looking for one, and that will tire you out, and you will get tired of not finding the reason why you are tired.

"Nameless," says the text: "Experience oneself beyond concepts and names."

So, we do not have to call it essence, nature, energy; the only reason we name it is to introduce ourselves to the subject; names are like a boat you board to reach the other side of the river: once you reach the other side of the river, you forget the boat.

The ninth and last says: "In the three times—past, present, and future—it has never been separate from you."

If you seek the nature of the mind, you will not find it; if you do not seek it, you will not lose it either. Primordially, it is there, within you; it is yours, you are it, and you will never be lost.

The text says: "Can you find yourself?" No. You can say: "Where is my dog?" or "Where is the child?" but do you ever ask someone: "Where am I?"

"If you seek yourself, you will never find yourself." In the nature of the mind, there is no notion of finding or losing; there is a sense of omnipresence within oneself.

There is a quote that says: "It never came, it never left, it is primordial in essence. It was never lost, it was never found, it is primordial within oneself. It was never sought, it will never be sought, there is no idea of finding the immutable essence that arises incessantly. When you look at it, you do not see it; when you stop looking, you find yourself in it." Cherish these lines.

“Even if you seek or study nothing, the natural state is always with you from the beginning without limit. There is nothing to lose and nothing to find. If you seek within yourself, can you find it? Therefore, you should not speak of seeking the nature of the mind. From the beginning, it was always with you, it has never been separate from you. No other being can see the nature of your mind. It is always self-originated. When you realize this, you have realized the ‘Naked Essence, Dharmakaya.’”

Three methods of observing the nature of the mind z

I have spoken of the nine methods for realizing the nature of the mind. There are also three methods for observation:

Where does the nature of the mind come from? Where does it remain? Where does it go? This can also be applied to questions we ask about our problems: Where do problems come from? Where do they remain? Where do they go? Or, about the images of the mind: Where do they come from? Where do they rest? And where do they go?

Where does the nature of the mind come from? First, look within yourself, let the experience of thought arise, and when it comes, see it as any thought, immediately look at the thought: where did it come from? There are two possibilities: from emptiness or from substance; from matter or from mind; from form or from space. If it comes from emptiness or space, observe: does it come from space? And search in all those aspects, in all places, in all characteristics from which you think it might come. You find nothing.

If you believe it comes from matter: does it come from external matter or internal matter? Does this thought come from the mountain, the tree, the river, the rocks? You keep searching and find that it does not come from any mountain, tree, river, or rock. And if you search inside and believe it comes from somewhere like an organ, or from the intestines, simply look inside and you will find nothing.

When you search outside and find nothing, and look inside and also find nothing, who is searching? Is there any substance that is the one searching? Does it have any color? Is it just one, or are there many searching? And you search, search, and find nothing: the subject completely dissolves. When you search and find no place from which the rigpa comes, who is observing where it comes from?

So there is no object in the place from which it comes, and you also cannot find the subject who is searching for it; therefore, you remain in that place where there is only space. You feel and experience, but there is nothing to find, and when you find nothing, there is nothing to talk about. You remain in that silence where there are no words, you can rest in that silence where there are no words to express. Like the mute person experiencing a dream of sugar and having no

words to express it nor the desire to express it with words: what they can do is rest in that fullness, without being conditioned by words or by their perspective.

In commenting on the nine ways of recognizing the nature of the mind, I related them to the experiences during the path and during the result. Now we are on the path: we are practitioners, we are practicing. And when you are on the path and have this experience, it is called “unlimited perspective.” In the result, that is, when we attain enlightenment, it is called “the unborn or unoriginated realization of the Bön or Dharmakaya.”

But this unlimited perspective does not disappear when you attain enlightenment; that experience continues; it is not that it stops and you obtain something else. That state of mind, when you attain liberation, is called unborn Dharmakaya—Bön—since Dharmakaya implies the notion of the unborn, of immutability. Unborn, limitless: these are the characteristics of Dharmakaya. The characteristics of Sambhogakaya are different: it is incessant, self-clarified, spontaneous.

In reality, there is no place from which these experiences come: they manifest by themselves. They are emptiness and they dissolve into emptiness. When you do not look at them, what you see is nakedness. When you look at them, you see nothing: that is unborn Dharmakaya. In this way, we conclude with the first method of observation.

1. Where does it remain? Where does it stay?

You continue with the search: “Where does my experience, my anger, my sensation remain? Where is it, where does it stay?” And when you search, you find nothing.

You can go from the grossest to the most detailed and subtle, and in the same way, you can ask: “Can I find a physical location? If there is a physical location, what is it? Where are my thoughts? In my liver, in my kidney...?” You search every part of the body for where the thought is and do not find it anywhere.

If you look for it externally, is your thought sitting, resting under a tree? Or above the tree? Or inside the tree? Or around the tree? You search, search, and search, and you go outward: is it hiding from you, or is it resting somewhere? You do not find it.

So, when you do not find that thought remaining or resting anywhere, either internally or externally, immediately the next search is: who is searching? And, following the same process, you ask yourself: “Is the observer inside the body, or is it outside?”

If you feel it is in the body, you have to search for it in the body meticulously, and if you believe it is outside, then you have to go and search there in great detail, to the point where you do not find the observer at all.

This process is very important. Generally, the psychological method presents a problem: from the point of view of therapy, the question always asked is: “Am I thinking incorrectly? Am I acting incorrectly? Am I not interacting correctly?” but in fact, we never ask ourselves: “Who is it that thinks this

way of thinking or acting is incorrect?” That question is left out. And, of course, it is very important that we ask ourselves that. If you think you are acting wrongly, who thinks you are acting wrongly? Perhaps the problem lies more in that than in the act of acting wrongly. Having a problem is not a big deal, but having a problem with the problem, or being stuck in it, is a bigger problem. In theory, you search and search; but the question constantly arises: “Who is it that searches?”

Images come to mind that illustrate this very well:

When you look outward and search externally, you find nothing. What you find is space, there is only space. Suddenly, you realize that there are no more places to search, and the only thing that matters now is: who is searching? Using the same method, you search internally, and what do you find? Light, awakened consciousness.

Before, you did not perceive this luminosity; what there was was the judging mind. Now, this mind is not the judging mind: it is the mind that discovers space, that discovers openness. When you look at the mind that discovered space, you see that the mind is luminosity. Remember this: wisdom arose at that moment; remember it: it arises when you look inward, when you perceive the light.

In relation to the search for the place from which thoughts come, during the path, this experience is called “unlimited perspective.” In relation to the search for who is observing, during the path, the experience is called “spontaneous meditation.” And during the result,

it is called: “the incessant body of fullness.” What Sambhogakaya means is incessant: the experience of light, which is an incessant experience. Incessant is a characteristic related to light: light is infinite; infinite means incessant.

I try to use specific terminology. I come from a background where I received training in epistemology and logic; words are very important to me, and I use them very consistently. When I say “infinite” in relation to light, I do so because that word has a very specific meaning. When I say “unlimited space,” that also has a very specific meaning. In fact, there is nothing wrong with saying “unlimited light”; but that is not precisely the characteristic of light.

When you are searching for where it remains, who remains there? What remains becomes spontaneously clear: clear and luminous. This clarity and luminosity are called “spontaneous clarity and luminosity.” Spontaneous means that no one did anything for it to arise.

This is how it is with a problem: you simply search for who created the problem, but you do not find the creator of the problem, you only find light if you search in the correct way. When you search incorrectly, you do find the author of the problem, and you will spend a lot of time with them. It is not about what you found, but how you are seeing it, or rather, who is seeing it. If the problem sees the problem, it will never be solved; if the solution sees the problem, there is a chance it will be solved.

Where does it go? If you were not very successful in the previous two searches, you will not be very successful in the third either.

Here, the apparent failure of not finding is a great success, because every time you have searched for something, you have not found it, but you have found something else, something different. In Tibet, it is said: “If you lose the yak, you look for the yak; if you don’t find the yak, what do you find? The absence of the yak.” So you no longer have a problem with the yak. If you try to find a problem and find nothing, that is good. If you try to find the author of the problem in the mind and do not find it, that is also good.

When you search for a problem, you find space. When you search for the author of the problem, you find light. And the union of space and light is very important.

The first process helped the second. If you have good space, you can have good light. Probably an architect would understand this easily: the way you create space influences the light. The third process consists of searching where it goes.

Thought comes and goes, and the question that interests you now is: where has it gone?

It is the same search: does it go towards matter, or towards space?

If it is towards matter, does it go towards internal matter? Is my thought in my lung, or in my heart? Or does it go towards external matter? Did it go to the tree, the lake, or the river? It is self-clarified, arises by itself, remains in itself, and liberates itself. The experience is very similar: you cannot find it. And when you search for the one who is searching, the same happens, you do not find them either.

During the path, that experience is called “action without a trace.” That sounds like a good spy who leaves no trace, who leaves no trail behind: there are no

footprints of their journey. Now, in the world we live in, with your name, your credit card number, your social security number... every time you use one of those numbers—the number that identifies you—you leave a trace behind. When you do not use the number that identifies you, your passage is clean, you leave no trace, no one knows you passed by. That is the action of the yogi: the yogi can laugh for an hour in the morning, cry for an hour at noon, shout for an hour at night, and the next morning they are completely fresh. That laughter, that crying, that shouting, does not continue the next morning.

These are called trace-free actions, actions without a trace. Healthy, confident, strong people are not so affected by experiences; the experience comes and goes, they do not cling to it. If the person is weak, they have to work hard to overcome it.

During the result, action without a trace is called non-dual Nirmanakaya, non-dual emanation, the incarnation of manifestation.

If you have an action without a trace, you are capable of doing a lot. If at noon you do not worry about the morning's problem, then you are capable of more creativity. The characteristic of Nirmanakaya is the ability to manifest many bodies at different times, in different places. This is the idea of Nirmanakaya: imagine the manifestation of Buddha in many different places at the same time. Can you imagine yourself in ten different places, in ten different eras, and

active? It is difficult to imagine. We will do it when we are enlightened.

Let us focus on the level of samsara. There are people who are capable of doing many things; they do their practice, they do their studies, they do a hundred thousand businesses, and they have different circles of friends among whom there is no relationship, but they are capable of interacting with everyone, and when it comes to meditating, they are great meditators, and if they engage in business, they are very successful. Imagine that you have the capacity to carry out this diversity of activities. This is the characteristic of Nirmanakaya. The only reason someone is capable of doing this is because one of their manifestations does not affect the other. And why does this happen? Because they are not clinging to a specific characteristic, they are not carrying it over to the other situation; their mind is clean and unclouded. It is like what happens with the five senses: you watch a movie, you hear sounds, you see images, you eat your popcorn, you feel the warmth of your clothes, and the senses are not in conflict with each other. The sense of hearing does not say: "Please, do not watch those images, let me listen and do not distract me," nor does taste say: "Stop the movie, stop the sound, let me eat my popcorn." No, that does not happen. The consciousness of the sense of taste or hearing is not saying this because the consciousness of each sense is complementing the others, it is complementing the totality of being, receiving the

totality of information, without one interfering with the other. Why? Because they are senses and they do not have thoughts, they are not conceptual. If they were, they would affect each other.

11! SPACE, OPENNESS-LIGHT, CLARITY

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO SPACE

I cannot lose myself because space cannot be lost in space. Lópon Sangye Tenzin

Space has the following qualities: it is infinite, it permeates everything, it possesses unlimited expansiveness, it has no bottom or surface, it is immeasurable, it does not contract, it is immense, eternal, and immutable—it is beyond words, concepts, philosophy. It is the state of truth that in Dzogchen is described with the term “single sphere,” or “single truth.” That space sometimes appears to us as a reality outside of us, and at other times, as a reality within us; but we share space with the internal and external world because space does not truly have an outside, inside, or middle. The one who has the experience is the one who has the outside, inside, and middle; but when the one who has the experience discovers that it is simply their mind that is creating that outside, inside, and middle, then they arrive at absolute truth, at the direct and profound understanding of Dharmakaya.

117

118 »»» SPACE, OPENNESS—LIGHT, CLARITY

The example of a house can be given to describe what space is like. The space in a house is seen as a house, not as space—if the house is square, the space looks square; therefore, space has no form by itself. Our pure consciousness has no limits; we create the limit, and the more limited we are, the more difficult it will be for us to know what it is to be in unlimited space. The less limited we are, the better we will understand the Dzogchen perspective. If the house falls down, the inner space unifies with the outer space. But this experience only occurs in relation to the walls of the house, because the space never changed, it was never divided; the division resided solely in the walls. And when they fall, then one has the experience of the dissolution of duality, the experience of the unity of inner and outer space.

In the Dzogchen tradition, external space is considered very sacred. In a similar way that people can love the earth and trees, Dzogchen practitioners are considered lovers of space. Because when they deeply understand and experience the meaning of space and unify with it—with the essence of space—they can see

that the external is also internal, and when they carry out the practice called “the unification of spaces,” they realize that the inside unifies internally through the mind and externally through the eye. These two processes, carried out through the mind and through the eye, are closely linked, and that is why both are used: the unification of space is done through the mind and the eye. This unification is not a progressive process that goes from inside to outside or from outside to inside; it is a self-discovery, not a process. A process would imply that there were two things—there cannot be a process when there is only one thing—and this self-discovery is a discovery of unity. There is no object or subject. It is not a question of duality, it is an understanding of the singular, the unique.

To illustrate this, let us use the following example: in our language, we have words like “people”; when we say this word, we are not referring specifically to you or me, nor are we saying that it is someone good or bad, nor whether it is one or ten: “people” is a word that expresses something unified, it is unifying a multiplicity. Sometimes, our experience becomes very narrow. For example, we have the space of the house, but we cannot see that this space is infinite, that there are no boundaries, that there is no problem of lack of space. However, generally, we only think about the walls, and that is how problems arise. If you only see the limits, the boundaries, then the experience you have is very small, very limited, and problematic. For example, if you could see the Earth from the Moon, you would have a very different perspective: the entire continent would be in a small place, and perhaps Mexico City would not exist from that perspective. But if you only see the limited spaces—the wall, for example—then the problem arises. It becomes enormous, it becomes everything, because you do not have the experience of space. Instead, if you connect with the infinity of space, the problem becomes nothing. If you see the wall from the perspective of the problem, then you cannot have the experience of space; the problem arises within that space; if you can only see the problem, you cannot see the space in which it is occurring. If you are able to see the space in which the problem is occurring, it dissolves instantly, because space has never been affected by it: space accommodates everything.

For us, anger and love are two different experiences; but from the perspective of space, they are not, because space accommodates, holds, or includes both in the same way. Space is non-dual and therefore has no duality between love and anger. We do have duality; that is why, when we have the experience of love, we feel connected to ourselves, and when we have the experience of anger or hatred, we feel disconnected from ourselves. But this happens only in our minds; in reality, we cannot disconnect from ourselves, there is no force in the Universe that can disconnect us from ourselves. However, from our limited perspective, this experience is one of disconnection.

Let us think about space: everything, every mind, every experience has its place in space, and generally, when we experience something, we lose sight of space.

In Dzogchen, there are the terms chi ing, which means external space, and nang ing, which means internal space. For example, when the practice of “looking at the sky” is done in a group, at first everyone experiences the same sky; this is called external space, and it is the space that everyone shares. After an hour of meditation, each person begins to experience something different: one sees stars, another sees lights, and so on; each sees something different, and this corresponds to their own internal space. When you go into a darkness retreat or a personal retreat, everything that emerges—all those visions—arises from your internal space; that is why the value and beauty of internal space are very important.

Some people do not want so much space, they do not want so much breadth, they want something more cozy. On one occasion,

during a seminar on the five elements, a person asked me if they could skip the element of space; they had problems with their wife: she wanted more space, and he wanted to be closer to her. This often happens: when one wants space, the other wants closeness, and vice versa.

The problem is that we cannot ignore space. How does one avoid space? Can you not be in the space you are in now? Think about it for a minute: can you be outside of that space for that minute? You might walk on a platform, but can you be outside of space? No; do you realize this? The notion of space that each person has is different. Sometimes we say: “I have enough space in my life.” Do you feel you have enough space in your life, or do you want more?

The space that remains and permeates, the space that moves, and the space that arises

We can refer to the space that remains and permeates, the space that moves, and the space that arises.

The space that remains and permeates is the one in the heart. You can say: “I want to experience openness in my heart.” “Space” and “openness” are two words that in this context mean the same thing. Essence, in the sense of openness that remains and permeates, is in the heart chakra*.

The space that remains and permeates is the base, it is the natural condition; that is why we say it “permeates”: because that is how it is, it is there, it is now, it is “presence.” With your eyes closed, try to feel it in your heart.

In this case, we refer to two channels that connect each eye directly to the heart.

When you see something, you are seeing something that manifests in space, in openness itself, in expansion itself.

To connect with the openness in the heart and in the movement through the channels, you can close your eyes; when doing the third connection, which is with the space of light, open them.

When chanting Guru yoga, implore the Master to help you discover that openness in your heart; tell him: “Please help me discover the quality of space in energy, please help me discover openness in manifestation.”

Praying to Dharmakaya is different from praying to Sambhogakaya or Nirmanakaya. For example, when you pray to Nirmanakaya, you know you are praying to your Masters, to your guardians; you know how to pray to guardians or ask them to protect you, and when you find yourself in circumstances that require greater protection, you invoke them more strongly: you burn incense, you fumigate. But how do you pray to the source of everything? You cannot ask the source to help you in your business or to help you find a good job; when you pray to the base, you go beyond what you want or do not want. Think that every time you carry out a purification or cleansing practice, you get rid of some things, perhaps without the intention of cultivating others. If your space is blocked, contaminated, or confused, you go beyond those obstacles, and through these practices, you eliminate emotional, physical, and mental blockages and purify yourself; this provides you with another point of reference regarding space.

When you feel very happy, there are two ways to experience that happiness: one is by feeling very excited and thrilled, and the other is more complete: it involves feeling totally satisfied and fulfilled. This feeling of fulfillment is not because you have accumulated everything you need—that is not the meaning—but rather the feeling that you lack nothing. It is the feeling of being complete. This feeling of fulfillment, of being satisfied, is what is meant in Dzogchen by the expression “the great fullness.”

Many times, this feeling of being complete, satisfied, full, open, is obscured. There are physical, emotional, energetic, and mental obscurations, and for some people, these obscurations are so strong that they completely overshadow the perception of their essence, making them feel weak and insecure and in need of protection. As I said, every time you do purification practices, you empty yourself of certain things; you take something away, and this allows you to connect with openness.

In practice, we move towards emptiness; we are not accumulating anything, and often we do not have a good connection with total emptiness. When you connect with Dharmakaya, what do you experience? What does it mean to you? What is your connection like? Many people have a connection with Dharmakaya similar to the one they would have with a guardian, for example, or they have a connection with their essence similar to the one they would have with their car.

Often, they identify more with their car than with their own essence, not just with the car but with everything external and material, with their biological appearance or with their social position and power. In those cases, the connection with their own essence is not clear.

It is important to understand that when we do purification practices, it is also advisable to fast, not speak, not interact, be alone. What does it mean to be silent? What does it mean to be completely alone? “All of that

is a journey towards great perfection. Our body, our speech, our mind, our creativity, everything can be a very positive manifestation; but often there are experiences that obscure our mind. So, how do we connect with Dharmakaya? Through silence, through stillness, with an open heart, through beauty, through devotion, by feeling it as it is and feeling the serenity of all that is, by relaxing and being.

I believe there are more ways to connect with Dharmakaya, and all those mentioned previously are correct.

Practicing in the heart is not trying to open the heart; it is trying to discover the openness that already exists in the heart. When the heart is emotionally closed, it makes sense to try to open it, because in that case, by trying to rediscover the space that is there, we may find that there is none. It is then that physical practices such as 734 Lung, Trul Khor, Yoga, or Chi Khung can be used, which move the body’s energy so that we can experience the life force and love. Often, in human beings, obscurations occur more at the physical and emotional level, that is, they occur more at the energy level than at the mind level.

Often in life, things happen to us that make us lose contact with the base. We also say that often life becomes very flat, very bland; if your life is very bland and you lack creativity, you can connect with Nirmanakaya, and if your life is very scattered and you need more grounding and contact with the base, you can connect with Dharmakaya; if it is scattered and confused externally, you can go inward and connect with the space of the heart.

There are very precise ways to go inward. We could say that we have an instinctive way of going inward, of withdrawing: when something scares us, we immediately go inward, but we are not very clear about where we are going; we only know that by going inward, we protect ourselves. It is very natural for everyone to go home if there is a problem; if you have problems with your employees, you go home; if you have problems with your husband or wife or with your children, you go to your room, and when you have problems in your room, you go to sleep. As I said, it is very natural and instinctive to withdraw or go inward when there are problems; what is not clear is in which direction we are

going: “What is my path? What is my destination? Where am I going?” But in a real sense, it is a journey inward, towards the heart, towards our center. Because the heart is not only the center of our experience and our life, it is the center of the Universe, and the only place where we find the center of the Universe and of our being is the space of Dharmakaya.

Basically, what I mean is that when things come into your life that start to bother you, then the practice I have referred to can help you. For example, if you had a very complicated day at work and you go home, you go to your room, and you can sit in front of the altar and go to your heart.

When in practice you experience space in the heart and in the channels and then open your eyes, you see forms, colors, lights, and objects. And if you are able to maintain the connection with space in those forms and lights, it means that those things are flexible and free, they are free forms, free lights, free colors; you are no longer trapped in the form and solidity of things, and therein lies the beauty of the practice: in that flexibility and detachment.

I have referred to the wall, to lights, to colors, but look for similar examples in your own life. When you have a problem that affects you and completely obstructs your experience of space, the base from which you start is the problem itself, so when you open your eyes, you project it outward, you see suffering, you feel bad. Instead, when you are deeply connected with the space of the heart and with the moving space, when you open your eyes to your daily life and the world around you, to the full range of your experiences—regardless of whether they are easy, difficult, confusing, or make you angry—you see everything from the perspective of space, and then you can see that perhaps there is no reason to be angry or feel bad; you perceive that things are fine as they are because you see them from the perspective of space. As we mentioned before, even in difficult situations, you can say: “It’s okay.” That “it’s okay” comes from that space in your heart, and that space is the base, or Dharmakaya, or essence, whatever you want to call it.

When you have many things in your kitchen and decide to throw them away or sell them, then there is a lot of space in it; but that is external space; when you have a small apartment but upon entering it you say: “What a beautiful and large space I have!”, that is internal space; when there are leaks in your house and there is no food or blankets but you say: “What a beautiful home!”, that is internal space; or, when your house is very elegant and everything in it is luxury but you feel miserable, that is a lack of internal space.

I will summarize what I have expressed. If you feel you lack creativity, concentrate on the space of the heart, feel the space in movement through the channels, and when you open your eyes, emphasize what you see outside: the colors,

the images, the things; see it all full of energy, as if you were hearing something very interesting or seeing a fascinating image—see it that way, feel the desire to see in this manner. The emphasis is on what you see outside, but always maintaining the connection with that space in the heart. The way to see outward is by fully relating to the external world, feeling completely, seeing completely, smelling completely, tasting completely.

Instead, when your experience of the world becomes confusing, gray, unstable, instead of looking outward, look inward and experience that vastness or expansion of space in the heart. Why do you want to do this? Because if you feel confusion outside, it means you lack space inside. In the world, there are so many stimuli, so many experiences, so many things, that if we related to each one of them, it would be tremendous: we cannot relate to everything, but to relate to those things with which we do want to relate—to our goals in daily life or on the spiritual path—we have to withdraw and try to find that space within ourselves regarding those experiences; that is a very good practice.

Let us examine the two aspects of disturbances: one would be the lack of creativity in a broad sense, and the other would be in a more specific sense, related to obstacles to our own creativity. By creativity, we mean those experiences in which we can be creative in our lives. So many things happen in our lives, in our experiences, in our relationships, that sometimes it is difficult to manage them well. When that happens to you, you go inward; conversely, when you lack creativity in your life, you put the emphasis outward. Sometimes you get very excited about something and immediately feel the impulse to take some action. Observe this feeling in yourself: when you are very excited and thrilled about something, it is a very rapid energetic sensation, it is very flexible; it is similar to space.

One of the poems by Lópon Sangye Tenzin says: “Let your inner space be in the outer space.” This is like pouring inner space into outer space through the eyes.

Imagine you are a teapot with boiling water; through the spout, you pour the water into a lake. What happens then? Those two waters merge. The experience of the fusion of inner space with outer space provides an intense sensation of expansion and vastness.

Dharmakaya means space. The space in the heart is the same as the space of the wall. In Dharma, these two spaces are connected to each other and are the essence, they are Dharmakaya: they are the source. When you want to connect with Dharmakaya, you do not need to have an image, such as that of Sherab Chamma*; the reason you have the image is because you cannot connect with space because it is too vast, and therefore you feel you might get lost. You need a little support, so you resort to the image of Sherab Chamma as a representation of

the source, and when you see it, you have an experience in your heart. So, you relate that image to the heart, not to the mind: you feel it, you do not think it. It is what you know, not what you think you know. You connect directly with that experience, and there is no conceptual limit.

When you practice the union of the three spaces, it is possible that your experience may have little depth or little intensity, but perhaps you want to try to obtain an experience similar to the one described above by trying to feel that emptiness in your heart. That can be a good access point: it is as if you merge with Dharmakaya or immerse yourself in space or in essence; this would be the meaning.

In the practice of the union of the three spaces, perceiving openness or space in the heart comes very close to the depth we want to experience in meditation, and when we get that close, it is good to immerse ourselves or merge with Dharmakaya or with essence: that is the space that comes closest to deep experience.

When we speak of the unification of the three spaces, we are actually talking about the same space; we simply divide it into three: the space of the base, the space of the path, and the space of the result or fruit.

In the context of practice, these relate respectively to the space of the heart, the space in movement, and the space of the outside.

The unification of the three spaces relates to emptiness. Generally, the experience we can have of emptiness can give us a feeling of great power, or it can cause us fear. When you get home and have nothing to do, you look around and say: “Well, what do I do?” What happens to you is that you are in that space where there is a certain emptiness, and therefore you feel you have to do something to fill it, so you go shopping or go for a drive; but that is precisely the space in which you must remain. Often, we find it difficult to relate to this empty space because we are not familiar with it, because we are afraid of it, because we feel that there is no life or color there, and consequently, we feel that we need to do something to avoid it. When monks and yogis go to the mountains or caves and isolate themselves, they are precisely seeking that space, that quality of space that we flee from by going shopping.

Imagine walking in the desert for a month, or spending forty-nine days in a dark room, or in those moments when you are completely alone: you can interact with nature, but you cannot argue with anyone. What you can do is argue with yourself, and you probably will. That is why, when a long retreat is undertaken, in the early stages one goes through all the realms*, from hell to the realm of hungry ghosts and so on up to the realm of the gods; it is hard to share the experience of hell with someone. Truly imagine that you are completely alone in the desert or

that you spend forty-nine days in a dark retreat: what you are experiencing is that emptiness and how, in that emptiness, you experience yourself.

CHAPTER 12

LIGHT—LUMINOSITY—CLARITY

Realizing something or not realizing it makes all the difference.

Introduction to Light

When we think of light, we think of the luminous light of the Sun, the light of a candle, electric light, energetic light, or something similar; we usually think in those terms.

I want to explain what is meant by light here. It is something very complex. Light has a great diversity of meanings ranging from one extreme to the opposite. In your heart, there is a very pure presence: the pure presence of space. That is light; it is a very subtle light. When you feel movement, there is something flowing. That flow can be a flow of very pure energy, or it can be joy, inspiration, devotion: a very profound experience that flows. That is also light. When in practice you open your eyes, your senses, your mind, you see things: you see a flower, a tree, a river, rocks; all these external appearances are also light. Thus, from pure presence to gross appearance, everything is light.

If, in the house—in the space of the house—you turn on a light, the house illuminates, the inner space of the house illuminates; if you open a window, luminosity travels outward. The light from outside can enter, and the light from inside can go out, and this experience happens in space.

However, commonly, when you relate to forms, you lose the ability to relate to light; light is in all forms, but you can no longer see it. It is like the Sun: the Sun is unique; it shines, it illuminates everyone, it is reflected in all windows, in all rivers, and on any surface capable of reflecting it. Nevertheless, if you try to see the reflection of the sun on a piece of charcoal, you will not be able to see it; although the sun is reflecting on the charcoal, the charcoal cannot show that reflection. The luminous essence permeates everything, but some things do not have the reflective quality. We do. We can have the experience of the unlimited luminosity of the universe because we have the reflective quality of pure consciousness.

We can have the experience of the luminosity of unlimited space within ourselves and by ourselves. Because we have that possibility, we can go from a particular experience to the experience of the Universe, from a particular place to all places. Light is what allows us to see; light is what allows us to emerge from our

darkness. If there is no light in a room, we cannot see, but if there is no light within us, we are lost. When you feel peace and experience peace, that is light: it gives you life, it gives you energy. When you feel joy, that is light, it is the light in experiences. When you see a light in your meditation, when you suddenly see white flashes, or a beautiful deity in a dancing posture, that is also light, it is a vision light; you can perceive light in many ways.

It can be said that open awakened consciousness is light at the base; when you see flashes in a vision, you can say it is light in energy, and when you see a goddess or any deity as a form of light, it is manifested light. Both the light at the base and the manifested light—even our entire being, our body—is the same light. When you have pain in your knee or back, or a lot of pain in your body, you do not necessarily feel much light, but it is light; it is a gross light, samsaric light, but it is light, and in that samsaric light, there is nirvana.

The most subtle light is the pure presence in the heart. And what is the grossest? If you can say: “Ah, I live in a beautiful world!” that beautiful world in which you live is light. On the other hand, if you say: “Oh, I live in a terrible, miserable world!” then it is probably not a very pure light; perhaps you are living in a very dark light. The world you experience, you have created yourself. When we look at each other, we say: “He is very pleasant,” or “she is very pleasant,”

“we are very good friends,” “that person is so pleasant, so good, so active, so full!” We can look at each other and find good qualities. Those qualities come from you, you are projecting them: that is certain. But on the other hand, we say: “Oh, this other person always causes problems! They are not kind, they are not peaceful, they are not loving, they are selfish!” and of course, that also comes from you. Sometimes, when two people see the same situation, everything seems fine to one of them, and everything seems wrong to the other. It is clear that this way of seeing things comes from within us. If you find yourself in a situation where everything seems wrong to you, it is fine to see it that way as long as you are able to use your knowledge of the Dharma to reflect

on it; you can use it and say to yourself: “Well, this is what I am experiencing.” It is not that you have to agree with everything, nor repeat to yourself: “Everything is my projection.” You can simply say: “I recognize that I have a lot to do with this.” You need a little compassion for yourself to be able to feel compassion for others. So, it is not about looking outward, at what you are projecting, but about asking yourself: “How do I feel? What is it that I am feeling through my experience?”

Awakened Consciousness

Basically, we give ourselves very little time to connect with ourselves. The more we connect with ourselves, the better we can connect with awakened consciousness. That awakened consciousness is what I refer to as light. There is a very beautiful and very subtle level of awakened consciousness, and there is a very gross level. For example, if you are chopping a potato, you have to have consciousness; otherwise, you will chop your finger instead of the potato. This consciousness is more related to the potato and the knife and, certainly, to the finger. But the other type of awakened consciousness refers more to being aware of yourself: an awakened consciousness that comes more from the inside out and encompasses everything, rather than a specific consciousness that jumps from a particular place and looks at only one thing. Thus, the broader awakened consciousness encompasses the narrower awakened consciousness. There are three different forms of awakened consciousness. In the book Wonders of the Natural Mind, there are three examples: the first is the metaphor of the snowflake dissolving in the ocean; the second is that of a ray of light melting frost. For the third, I make this analogy: it is like when you go to one of those fairground games where you put in a coin, and then heads start to pop out, and you have to hit them very quickly as they appear, and if you get distracted for a moment, a head will come out and stay there for a while without you hitting it. This head represents an experience that remains undissolved in your life.

In any case, there are three forms of awakened consciousness, and the best is represented by the snowflake dissolving in the sea. It is when you have reached such a broad level of awakened consciousness within you that, regardless of what you are experiencing, this experience simply dissolves; there is no place for it to remain. You can say to yourself: “I feel angry,” and the next instant the anger is gone. It is like a large snowflake in the sea: in an instant, it becomes liquid, effortlessly. It is effortless liberation because awakened consciousness is very deep and permeates everything.

In the second example—the ray of light melting frost—you might think there is some effort involved: the ray of light descends, heats the frost, and melts it; the activity of heat is what melts the ice. It is a consciousness that pays specific attention to the problem: “Ah, I have a problem with anger, I need to work with my anger.” This consciousness is a 24-hour-a-day observer that always watches if anger appears, and when this anger arises, it sends a light and dissolves it. It is always vigilant, unlike the previous one, where there is no one watching.

The last example—and this is my own invention—has more to do with conceptual awakened consciousness, and it is what we usually do in our lives: when we have a problem, we try to deal with it and solve it; otherwise, the problem will deal with us. If a problem arises, you deal with it; if a second problem arises, you deal with it; you go one by one, and this involves a lot of effort. In general, effort is defined as progressive conceptual work; it is not simply being and letting it dissolve, but rather working hard to dissolve it.

The first awakened consciousness is not conceptual at all; the second involves a certain sense of effort, and the third is very conceptual and involves a lot of effort. The type of consciousness is defined by how you dissolve.

In Dzogchen, it is said: “Realizing something or not realizing it makes all the difference.” The difference is that realizing is nirvana, and not realizing is samsara: it is a big difference, samsara is suffering, and nirvana is supreme bliss. Because we do not realize, we have focused only on the external, we have moved away from ourselves.

CHAPTER 13

UNIFICATION OF THE THREE SPACES AND THE THREE LIGHTS

Dharmakaya is where everything is one, it is the essence: it is the unique taste.

There is a difference between the unification of the three spaces and the unification of the three lights. In the unification of the three spaces—the space in the heart, the space in the channels, and the space in appearance—awakened consciousness is present, but in the experience, the connection with the presence of space is more consistent.

It is very important to have an experiential understanding—not merely conceptual—of the inseparability of these three spaces. When Dzogchen teachings speak of integrating the mind with space through the practice of looking at the sky, they mean that the practitioner is trying to be present in the inseparability of these three spaces. The reason this practice is done by looking at the sky is not because the intention is to limit sensory perception exclusively to the consciousness of the sense of sight; it is possible to experience the inseparability of the three spaces through all the senses. The sense of sight is favored because it is the most

important of the five sensory consciousnesses and because it is associated with the element of space.

Inner luminosity originates in the heart and passes through the two channels that connect the empty inner space of the heart with the empty outer space of the sky through the eyes—“the water gates of inner light”—and through them, the inner luminosity is projected into the outer space. In this way, the space of the heart, the space in the channels through the consciousness of the sense of sight, and the surrounding outer space are connected.

This is the union or integration of the three spaces; when we achieve it, we no longer feel limited by our body to a specific place: we are present everywhere in limitless space.

Regarding the unification of the three lights, light is presence, open awakened consciousness; this presence of light in the heart, in the channels, and in appearance is very vivid, and when these three lights or these three presences are united, that is called the unification of the three lights.

The unification of the three spaces is, so to speak, going towards space (the source), and the unification of the three lights is going towards light.

It is very important to have both experiences of emptiness and luminosity. In the teachings of the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud, there is talk of ma and bu, mother and son. The mother is emptiness, which is nothingness or everything. It is called the mother because everything comes from it. And the pure presence in this experience is called the son; the son is conscious, he knows, and is called son because he recognizes the mother. Recognition is consciousness.

We have emptiness and luminosity. What is emptiness? It is the same as luminosity. What is luminosity? It is the same as emptiness. In experience, you cannot separate one from the other; it is from both that energy manifests. When we say “both,” we are not saying that energy manifests from one or the other seen separately: energy manifests in the inseparability of luminosity and emptiness.

Dzogchen teachings explain that the movement of energy (tal) in the primordial state gives rise to light in the form of the five pure lights*, and when these increase, the “sound of light” arises. The five lights are the basis of the manifestations of the energy of clear light, in the form of sound, light, and rays. These are expressions of the energy of rigpa (open awakened consciousness). We understand that sound, light, and rays are manifestations of the energy of our own primordial state and the expression of our awakened consciousness when we perceive them in the state of presence, of rigpa.

When these three objects of vision—light, sound, and rays—manifest, if the changing mind realizes that they are manifesting and that this is a vision coming from ourselves, through these visions we experience the unoriginated, unborn, naked consciousness, and then it is when we clearly realize ourselves, we connect with the base that has no darkness.

In samsara, there is darkness, and we can think of six darknesses. For example, the first would be when you are among many lost people. The second is when you join that “club” and then you too are lost. The third is when you begin to perceive and judge all those things you do, because that comes from darkness: you are angry because you do not know yourself, and then anger begins to arise. Then, when you walk and see someone who provokes your anger—you get angry seeing

how that person walks or talks or does things—then you want your experience of that person to cease. The way we conceive of ourselves is the way we integrate and then project ourselves, and thus, we see outside, in appearance, the same thing that is inside us, and we see that person as someone terrible who clashes with us; that is the problem. Perhaps the previous example is a bit exaggerated, but often we are intolerant of a person's way of being and tell them: "If you would change this or that, then we could be together; otherwise, no." It can be understood that the other person interferes with you, and then the flow of your experience is blocked: there is no space within you, and if there is no space, there is no light. If you want to have light, you must have space; therefore, the main thing is to cultivate the three spaces.

Trek chod and Tögal

Space and light are the same in essence, but not in appearance. It is as if we were to say that essence and nature are the same. Space cannot be separated from light, and light cannot be separated from space, but in our experience, the situation is a bit different: first we have to experience space to then experience light. In Dzogchen practice, you first have to develop Trek chod and then develop Tögal. The practice of Trek chod is the reconnection with space, and the practice of Tögal is

the development of light. What we see as appearance is limited by our own mental conceptualization unless it is the pure visions we see through the practice of Tögal.

Dzogchen is a direct path, and the most advanced practices focus on the methods of Trek Chod and Tögal, which are exclusive to Dzogchen. Trek chod means "to detach by cutting." It is a practice of contemplation with a unique pointing-out instruction and consists of remaining in the natural state. Tögal means "to work" or strive to achieve direct realization. It is not only about remaining in the state of contemplation, but also about working to integrate contemplation with the movement of energy in the form of light and visions. Basically, this involves the contemplation of light. (This work with light and visions is especially useful in the bardo when the three great visions—sound, lights, and rays—arise.) Through this practice, we can understand the differences and connections between the subtle dimension and its solid physical representation, which is our karmic vision.

In essence, your physical body is light, and not just light but the five pure lights. Why? Because its foundation is the five elements: our entire body is built on the basis of the five elements. That is why we speak of five organs, five parts of the intestines, five senses, five branches of the body: five fingers, five, five, five. Why five and not more? Because of the five elements. When consciousness realizes this base, it experiences light. When the mind experiences light, it has the opportunity

to merge more and more with it. And as the mind that created this physical body is now merging with the light, it is returning to the pure source and to the light, and begins to experience the material world in a more lucid way, begins to experience situations and circumstances with greater flexibility, and thus begins to experience more and more light even in the physical body. Finally, when one fully realizes this, the body transforms into the rainbow body. This is called ja/u. It can be called enlightenment, the rainbow body. Rainbow body means body of light.

Dzogchen is probably the only teaching in the world that refers to the body of light.

When I spoke of the integration of the three lights, I referred to the light that comes from pure space, to light as the pure presence in the heart, and to light as the presence we project into samsara. Based on this, pure light is the presence at the base, and its external manifestations are what we call “visions of Tögal” or “pure vision.”

What are the visions of Tögal? In a darkness retreat, we go through different states of visions: we may start by experiencing our hell, our hungry ghost realm, our animal realm, our human realm, our demigod realm, or our god realm; all of that is called impure vision. After that, we begin to have pure visions—all the Dakinis (Khandros), all the deities, and all the rainbows—and that is called “visions of Tögal”; that is also light. Regarding impure vision, we have impure visions in life when we see and perceive things as impure; when two people see the same thing, it may seem very beautiful to one of them and may be terrible for the other, so the perception varies for each person. Imagine that the person who has the purest perception of something develops it until they perceive pure light in all directions. Try to do it, see if it is possible, try it. When in your life you perceive everything you see in a purer way and begin to see more beautiful and loving things, think that this is the path and that every day will become better. Imagine that it is already getting better right now. Imagine how far you can go. The reason we see things as pure is because we are connected to ourselves. The more connected you are, the more pure light you will see, the more confidence you will have. To the extent that you have less connection, you will manifest insecurity. Your problem with the world is your own insecurity.

Pure vision is connected with pure energy, and pure energy is connected with the base. A definition of Tögal vision is: experiencing vision while being connected to the base. To achieve this, you could conduct an experiment with your way of seeing things: when you open your eyes during meditation, you can see the whole, or you can see a specific thing. When you see a specific thing, who is seeing? The one who likes the flower? The one who dislikes movement in their visual field? When you see specifically, you make distinctions between what you like and what you don’t; when you see the whole, your perception is connected with the

experience of the base, it is like a mirror. Depending on your perception, you can say: “My life is very heavy!” or “My relationship with so-and-so is very bad!” or, alternatively, you can say: “My relationship with so-and-so is wonderful!” There is then a difference between a situation that is open and flexible and one that is rigid and heavy; it all depends on your perception. If you feel complete, if you are connected to yourself and to this fullness, then you perceive things this way: complete and full. If you do not have that connection with fullness, then there is a gap, a sense of lack; you are not connected to yourself, you feel disconnected from yourself, and when you act, you are seeking this connection.

Practice of the three spaces and connection with presence (light, clarity)

Chant Guru yoga three times.

Continue with the practice of the unification of the three spaces.

Then, bring your attention to the heart; feel the space, try to feel that space.

Now, feel the presence in the space: there is a pure presence in your heart, perceive it. There is not only emptiness but also clear presence. Imagine there is a light in the heart; the presence is that light in the heart, and that light is the source of all qualities.

Remain there, holding the presence in the space.

Dedication of merit*.

Connection with oneself

Meditation helps us to allow experiences that connect us with ourselves, which is why we need to meditate. We seek these experiences because they are what bring us closest to who we are: they bring us closer to the base, to the essence, they bring us closer to Dharmakaya. There are other experiences that do not help us, they even distract us and hinder us. Let us think about the nature of a disturbance, for example, anger: when there is anger or rage, the connection is immediately lost. Reflect a little: what is it that makes you connected to yourself or disconnected from yourself?

Let us look and examine: how could it be that I am not really connected to myself? How could I not be me? There is no way one is not “me”; one always is who one is; one is who one is when sleeping, when awake, when thinking, when not thinking, when having problems, and when not having problems. But then, what is the experience of being disconnected? It is the perspective limited to a self defined as a very small being that actually exists for years and dominates our entire existence.

Dzogchen is recognizing that one is not that small self. A person is not just a lawyer; even if others consider them so, one does not have to believe it. One plays that role, one has to play it, and one can play it. If one plays, there is no suffering. The Khandro dances because she is happy, and her dance expresses that she is not afraid, it does not express that she is obsessed with dancing. Our suffering is largely related to the way we perceive ourselves, not to who we are. If you perceive yourself as the small self, you have greater suffering. If you can play and be less limited, your suffering will be less. Our limited self has come to occupy a central place in our lives and indeed often controls it, and this is due to the way we have been raised and educated. Consequently, you perceive yourself in terms of that small self that is very limited. Playing a role or a function in the world is not a problem in itself; but you do not need to identify with that role or function because, regardless of whether you experience yourself from the perspective of the small self or from that of the unlimited self, that role or function is only a part —not the totality—of who you are, and it is relative. Everything is always dissolving, everything is always moving, everything is always flowing, and to the extent that we can remain in that fluidity or connect with it, we will be connected with space. This is very important.

The big self does not represent a problem. It is not intrinsically big; it is only big in relation to the small self that we have created.

If a person has too much energy, too many experiences, there is a possibility that they will disconnect from themselves. It is typical that there are people who give a lot and feel that they are losing; this is not the proper way to give. If you give, you should not feel that you are losing, because then what you are giving is not a good gift. The same applies to love. There are people who say: “I tried to give a lot of love, but I was not reciprocated,” and they live it that way; this means they were giving more than they could give. The good gift is the one that comes from being connected to oneself. If you give your best without losing connection with yourself, there is no pain. So, when you give, you should not disconnect from yourself. This is valid in all situations. For example, when a person falls in love, they can identify so much with the other person that they disconnect from themselves. But it is possible to give a lot without disconnecting, and that is a very beautiful relationship. However, it is not so easy; it is a matter of balance between two poles: clarity and emptiness. This is how the teachings express it. Clarity would be the energy, what we give, and if we do not disconnect from ourselves, we do not lose emptiness. The moment you disconnect, suffering begins. When you are giving, loving, working, making things happen, if you are disconnected from yourself, suffering occurs. When your expectations are not met, you suffer much more if you are disconnected from yourself than if you are connected to yourself. The power of being connected to oneself is enormous.

And what is this being connected? Is it like a cable and a plug in an outlet? No, it is being connected to inner space, and if you are connected to this, then you are

open to situations, because space allows for all situations; you are open to everything: success, failure. If we are not connected, we are only open to success and closed to failure. When failure arrives and opens the door and enters, then suffering arises. This is a very frequent problem. So, it is good to have a different way of seeing this; otherwise, you suffer. Yogis and realized practitioners are no different from us, but they see things differently. They know how to go beyond the small self, and from there, the perspective is very different. They can connect the small self with the big self, they have a friendly relationship with both, and they can jump from one to the other with great ease. For normal people, it is very difficult to jump like that: they can only see from the small self, and then the perspective becomes very small, the world looks very complicated. The situation of those who have realization is similar to the situation of a normal person; what is different is the perspective. It is not that when one achieves realization the world changes, but the perspective changes; it is not that when one reaches this point, they enter a club of enlightened beings, the world remains the same.

There are people who say: “But I have practiced for so long, what is happening? Nothing changes! I did this, I did that, and nothing changes, everything is the same.” And this is because doing, in itself, does not change things: it is the perspective that makes the change. If you are seeing the same thing in the same way, how do you expect to change? Such a change cannot happen. We are very attached to our way of seeing the world and have the contradictory idea of wanting to change it. It is not about what you do, but how you see things.

When talking about this space of connection with oneself, in Dzogchen there is less emphasis on Prajnaparamita*, and the reason for this is that it is considered that in space, everything is perfect. There is love, there is compassion; it is a space full of richness, which is beyond fear and hope, and that is how it is when we are connected with space. When the big self is connected with space, it becomes playful, it can act in the world; and when it cannot do what it intends, it does not suffer, because the attitude is playful. It is like when a child is playing and cannot achieve what they want with a toy: the child can get very frustrated in their game, but their parents can see that this frustration is not so serious.

When you have this connection with space, you know you have nothing to lose, and you can see, examine, what you have really gained. If you can see what you have really gained, you realize that you have nothing to lose. Therefore, it is an extremely powerful experience; on the other hand, the experience of being connected only to the small self is a very complicated and fear-filled experience.

Remember the story of the yogi who goes to the village, and seeing that there is a crowd because there is a festival, he is very afraid of getting lost; he decides to tie a red ribbon to his foot so as not to get lost, and then he enters the festival and goes from one side to another, and when evening comes, he realizes that he has lost his ribbon and begins to shout: “Has anyone seen me?” because

he feels he has gotten lost. We all have red ribbons; one of the big red ribbons we have is our current project. If we lose our current life project, we feel totally lost because we are identified with that project, just as the monk identified with the ribbon. So, when we feel this experience of being lost, let us remember this story and remember that the yogi did not lose himself, he only lost the ribbon. He could not have lost himself because this is impossible: space cannot be lost in space, therefore I cannot lose myself; the ribbon, yes, I can lose it. Every time you feel this, remember the yogi and the ribbon and think: "I cannot lose myself because space cannot be lost in space." Lópon Sangye Tenzin used to say that for him, pouring space into space was an enormous experience.

In practice, when you open your eyes and the inner space unifies with the outer space, it is the same as when a child recognizes their mother in the midst of a crowd: they recognize her immediately and without any doubt, and in that recognition, there is immense joy. The experience of the union of inner space with outer space is like that of the child, and it is joyful if you are connected to yourself. If in the experience you lose yourself, suffering appears (as when the child has lost their mother), and therefore you become a victim of the experience, and the experience causes you fear.

Unique Taste

When talking about the three spaces, I said that the three are a single space and that the main purpose of the practice is to connect with ourselves. Especially when you practice in the heart, you are connecting with yourself, and when you focus your senses outward, you are rather working with energy. The real meaning of the experience of space is when the subject, the experiencing self, disappears. It is not that we say: "Ah, how wonderful space is!" Space is fine, but the one who is thinking that space is fine is not fine, nor is it bad, but there is still a duality there. When you completely merge with space—when you immerse yourself in the womb of Dharmakaya, in the Universe, in essence—there is no longer a sense of "I," duality disappears.

When we have the experience of being connected with Dharmakaya, two contradictory emotions such as those caused by the experience of a loss and by the experience of a victory can be the same; having or not having results in exactly the same. Sometimes we feel that if we don't have something, we will lose everything, even our lives. How many things do we have around us, on which we are totally dependent? "If I don't have this or that, I'm lost," like in ranchera songs. In Dharmakaya, there is no difference between all these things; Dharmakaya is the place where everything becomes one, it is the essence; to use the famous Dzogchen term: it is the "unique taste." That "unique taste," that unity, exists only

in that space. It is about being able to experience the “unique taste” through energy and through appearance.

In practice, try to feel space; in this space, the entire universe is connected, in space we are connected with Dharmakaya, the essence, the root, and we do not pray to reach that place: we are that place, we are complete.

It is the place where we are, we are simply there and we do not try to do anything.

In meditation, we can have a rich experience, but the moment something distracts us or moves, we can no longer remain in it: that “unique taste” dissipates, it does not remain. When we have doubts, meditation becomes unstable.

As I explained, the only place where the “unique taste” can occur is in the space of essence; in appearance, perhaps the “unique taste” cannot occur because the forms are different. Sometimes we try to do something and it doesn’t work, and then we suffer a lot, but other times we say: “Well, it’s okay”; our ability to say that is what measures how much “unique taste” we have regarding that experience. If the unique taste is present, when you say “it’s okay,” you are not saying it because you are losing energy and feel tired and depressed, it is not giving up; you say it because you truly feel it, because it is truly okay. Perhaps you have once desired something you could not obtain and said “it’s okay”; if that “it’s okay” was real, it means you remained connected to the base, that there was “unique taste” there. When it takes you a while to say “well, it’s okay” and you say it because you have no other option, that is not very good: in that case, the “unique taste” is not present.

When you eat and have many dishes in front of you, they do not have the unique taste; if everything, from the appetizer to the dessert, had the same taste, you would not return to that restaurant; the food must always have that different and good taste. However, in relation to the person eating, it is good to have that “unique taste.”

We might then ask if, when everything has the same taste, we run the risk of becoming people who no longer care about anything, who have no goals or ambitions: “If everything has the same taste and if everything is impermanent, then why struggle? What should we do with our ordinary lives? How can we avoid the feeling of losing the joy of doing things? If I don’t have to cling to what makes me happy nor reject what makes me unhappy, then where is the joy of living? If everything is perfect in itself, why do I have to try to change it?”

In the face of all these questions, the answer is one: there is a difference between what is and what we perceive. Some of those questions refer to what is; others

refer to our perception. As things are, they are fine, and in that sense, you do not have to change anything. However, you do not always perceive it that way, and then you feel that you have to go somewhere or do something to change it; you do all this for yourself. Sometimes you see a person and think: “This person has every reason to be happy; they have health, youth, wealth, beauty, love.” This person has all that, but is not happy. To realize that they have everything, that person would have to get rid of some of those things, part of their wealth; then, looking back, they would say: “Oh, life was so pleasant before! It was so beautiful when I was...!” In this way, they would realize, albeit a bit late, that they had everything to be happy; but even so, it is good to realize it.

When the “unique taste” is developed, it does not mean that everything becomes uniform. For example: when you have a good experience and a bad one, what makes them equal is their source, their base, their essence, not their appearance. In appearance, one is

good, and the other, bad. When the connection with the source is there, the appearance does not have much effect: when I feel sad, I feel sad; yes, I feel sad, but I maintain the connection; it is not that I stop feeling sad, but it does not have a negative effect on me; rather, that sadness will make me grow, because the connection is accommodating that feeling. It is like being able to cry in the presence of a good friend; your friend is a good friend, so you feel confident and cry. The fact that you have a good friend will not make you stop crying; on the contrary, you cry more. And hopefully, at some point, you will stop crying.

AN

EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN DZOGCHEN

CHAPTER 14

EXPECTATIONS IN DZOGCHEN

Having expectations is common. The fact that expectations are not met is also common. When your expectations are not met, what you need is to have a broader perspective.

Having no expectations in life is difficult, because as long as we are in a samsaric existence, it is impossible not to have them; what is important is not how many expectations you have, but to what extent they influence you. Some people are totally victims of their own minds due to these expectations and cannot find a way out of this situation because the mind, which could offer the way out, is here the cause of the problem. When your expectations are not met, what you need to

have is a broader perspective. For example, if you work in a company and are given a good position and told: “We are giving you this position only for six months,” you will be very happy working in your new position for those six months. If at the beginning of the seventh month, they tell you that you can work in that position for a few more months, you will work happily during those months because you do not know until when you will be there; you are aware that perhaps next month you will no longer have the job, but you know you survive, and every time the end of the month approaches, you are open to whatever happens because that

situation has placed you in an open position. Conversely, if you have a permanent job and after two years you are notified that you might be replaced by someone else, your experience is totally different: you feel insecure, uncomfortable, distressed, and you feel you have all the problems in the world. The situation is similar, but the perspective is different.

So, how do we relate to life? We have to relate to it in an open way. This does not mean that we do not make efforts to do things better, but we have to be open to both the good and the bad, and this will make our lives easier. We have to be attentive, because generally we tend to focus more on the reasons for being unhappy and less on the reasons for being happy; this seems to be the human condition. When we realize this, we can transform everything: what changed was our perspective on life.

Sometimes I feel very sad seeing that there are people who have great suffering. What is happening to them? They only see one problem, that problem they cannot overcome; they are stuck in a situation they see very clearly and do not realize all the other things they have in their lives. Because of that, they cannot see the beauty, they can only see one thing: the problem; they are attached to the problem.

Having expectations is normal. The fact that expectations are not met is also normal, because things do not always happen as one expects. When our expectations are not met, this makes us feel bad, makes us begin to experience human suffering.

Buddhism is a tool for working with these things. In the West, for example, every time an expectation is not met, it is experienced as an individual, personal failure. If a person tried to do something in their life and it was not achieved, they automatically think something is wrong with them. This is a very prevalent idea; the person does not stop to think if that project was very difficult to achieve, or what was happening, what the situation was. Sometimes we are not aware that we see this as a personal failure, but internally we are feeling it; we do not see that perhaps the failure had to do with the other person, with the business, or

with the job, but we feel that we did something wrong. What would be the difference if our expectations had been met? There would be no such difference, because that too would be an illusion.

We always place more emphasis or interest on what we do not have, on what is difficult to obtain, and we are not interested in what we obtain easily nor do we place emphasis on it. That is why it is said that we must learn to love what we have. But we do not do it, and we always want what we do not have. Then we truly have a problem: if we don't have it, it's a problem; if we have little, it's a problem; if we have too much, it's a problem. In Tibet, it is said that if one has a yak, one has the problem of having a yak; if one has two yaks, one has the problem of having two yaks; and if one has no yaks, one has the problem of not having yaks.

So, perspective is more important than content—that is my personal experience—and it is necessary to know how to process the emotions we experience when our expectations are not met. It is necessary to know what to do.

The way to process these situations is to depersonalize personal problems, that is, not to make personal problems personal. And when we do this, the problems are resolved. Generally, we take even those problems that are not personal as our own. If we were to say: "I did my best to achieve this business, but probably there was no karma, because it didn't happen," that would be the way to depersonalize the problem, because it means we understand that things sometimes happen and sometimes do not happen, and that it is not a personal failure, it is not that we did something wrong. This is a much better way to work with that situation. And it would be even better if we could depersonalize personal problems in Dharmakaya, because there is no personality there anymore; it simply dissolves.

CHAPTER 15

EXPERIENCES IN DZOGCHEN

Vision is mind Mind is emptiness Emptiness is clear light Clear light is union Union is Supreme Joy Dawa Gyaltsen

In Dzogchen teachings, there are three types of experiences: the experience of emptiness, the experience of clarity, and the experience of joy.

The teachings say that the way you experience yourself, the way you live this experience, is in a way nothingness: "I am nobody." Do you prefer to say "I am," or do you prefer to say "I am nothing"? The problem is the same: if you say "I am," then what are you? And if you say, "I am not," then what are you not? In a way, silence is best: we cannot say anything.

The experience of being unable to refrain from saying something, from locating something, from seeing a form, a name, a color, an identity, is nothing. And if you have to express it verbally, you can say: “it is nothing,” or you can say: “it is everything,” it is exactly the same. In experience, there are no limits; that is what makes the difference: you live it as something totally open, unconditioned, full of vastness and depth. And it is from that place that the universe can manifest; that is a good place. In Buddhist Bön teachings, we call that place from which the universe manifests “emptiness.” Usually,

when we say the word “emptiness,” it doesn’t sound very interesting; perhaps it is interesting for some people, but generally this word can cause some to say: “I already have enough emptiness in my life, I don’t want to learn more about emptiness.” In Buddhism, there is much talk about emptiness, and many books have been written about it, and sometimes I say that reading all those books can be painful.

In relation to emptiness—or fullness, as you wish to call it—experience is what matters. It may be that you feel complete sometimes, but great fullness is when you feel totally full and complete. So, emptiness is an important place.

Buddhism says that everything is empty, that everything is interdependent, nothing has inherent existence, and everything we see, we project ourselves; this is the philosophy. We learn this philosophy, and there are moments in our lives when we want to apply it, and we see a tree and say, “that is real,” and when we are faced with something we don’t like, we say: “that is empty, that is not there.” This is a playful way of applying it, and it is acceptable, it is like saying: “sometimes I want to, sometimes I don’t”; but there are moments in our lives when we suffer, and then we ask ourselves who is the one suffering. We do not want to fight against that suffering, because it is infinite; we want to go to the root of that suffering, which is ignorance.

Ignorance is the center or the root from which all suffering has been created; that is why we seek that root. The simplest way to seek it is to ask ourselves: “Who am I?” as I explained in # chapter 10. When you discover that you are not there, you say: “I do not exist!” The experience that you are not there, that you do not really exist, can be very intense and profound. Then, if you do not exist, your suffering does not exist, and thus you enter the experience of the yogi of emptiness. This is what people do in monasteries or in caves.

The first thing to understand is that every role we play in our lives is an illusion. But you don’t have to see it from a negative point of view; you can say it is a playful illusion or a joyful illusion, or perhaps some will experience it as a miserable illusion: it depends on how much inner work you have done. But however it may be, it is nothing more than an illusion, because it has no

consistency in itself; it changes constantly, you can never cling to that role. If you have the idea of clinging to it and making it permanent, it means you have not understood it. It changes constantly, all the time we see changes; that is impermanence. This means that in your life—in your business or in any other activity—you must reach a greater depth: it is about perceiving ourselves beyond all this conventional reality, beyond the roles we play.

Let's look at this situation in samsara. Imagine a person who is building a life as a businesswoman or businessman, as a mother or father. That person builds a life, and then says: "What a beautiful samsara!" And then, little by little, what they have built begins to dissolve. Perhaps a woman thinks she has a beautiful primordial nature consisting of being a wife, but when her husband leaves, she discovers that that was not her true nature. Perhaps then she thinks that it lies in being a businesswoman and works hard to build a beautiful samsara, but that too will eventually dissolve. And it may be that others do not even consider her a good businesswoman, so even if she tries to force it, that identity simply does not exist. So, none of the identity roles we want to develop in the course of life (and this does not mean that you are not a responsible husband or father) are real: all those roles disappear. You may feel that everything in your life is wrong and say to yourself: "Failure in business, failure in relationships, I am confused..." and when you attend a retreat, the same thing happens, and you say to yourself: "The practices are complicated, this is not for me, I can't find my place anywhere." Some people who go through these situations of failure call themselves losers; they feel like losers, and others see them as such. But often we fail to understand that this type of situation places us in a good position to recognize emptiness: we no longer have a husband, or business, or anything. A monk who walks for a hundred days in the desert may have left his wife, his business, everything. You did not want to leave any of this, but all of it left you. The monk's situation is the same as yours; in his case, it is a spiritual practice, and in yours, a samsaric loss. However, if you are mature and prepared, your discovery of emptiness can be much greater than the monk's; perhaps on the eightieth day of the journey, the monk realizes that it wasn't so bad to have a wife or eat a freshly made tortilla, he can imagine a lemonade, and all those things can come to mind. When people are prepared and mature, the experience of emptiness can be an enormous discovery, a great realization.

Human beings grow through suffering. Why? Because suffering is our limit, because every time we suffer and see our limitations, we have the opportunity to go beyond them or to work with them. In life, we go through experiences in which, despite ourselves, we lose things; that is forced emptiness. For example, if you are deeply in love with someone and that person leaves you, or if you are trying to consolidate the business of your dreams and it falls apart, imagine how you feel in that situation: it is not a feeling of expansive emptiness, the space is

small; what you experience is the absence of yourself, not of something else. In the story you tell yourself about it, you suffer because the other is absent, but in reality, what you experience is not their absence, it is the absence of yourself. If you reflect on that experience beforehand and open yourself to it and contain it and integrate it more and more, you will experience those same conditions differently. There are so many ways to experience ourselves!

Why does a person experience loss when they lose something externally? Because their way of experiencing themselves is through the external. Likewise, on the internal level, we will lose the energy of our body, our youth, or our flexibility; everything we have when we are young, we will lose. When your teenage son tells you at midnight: “Mom, get up, I want to go dancing now!” what do you feel? You no longer have that energy, and you begin to realize that you are not the same as before, and this is not easy for you to accept; however, others accept it easily and say to themselves, “it’s okay.” Why do some of us think it’s okay and others don’t? Those who consider it not okay are connecting with themselves through the energy of youth, and this is something external. That does not mean we do not experience ourselves through youth; what it means is that we do not have to limit the experience of ourselves in that way, but rather we must go beyond age.

The experience of space in the heart is a lived experience that has nothing to do with age, nor with excitement or absence of excitement: it is essence, it is omnipresence, it goes beyond everything. That is why we pray to connect with that experience, and when we feel the connection, it is a very profound experience.

It is not the same to experience something as to identify with that experience. In the mirror, many images can be reflected, some very beautiful, and others ugly; but the mirror does not identify with them, it does not say: “That is my face!” or “That is not mine!” The mirror simply allows images, energy, the beautiful, the ugly, everything to be reflected. The space of the heart has that quality: of accommodating everything and containing everything. To the extent that we can connect with that and allow those experiences, we reconnect with empty space.

In daily life, there is a path to reach the experience of emptiness: meditation. Our mind is naturally empty, its nature is empty, its essence is empty, but we have filled it with thoughts, emotions, feelings, ideas; it is full, but we must discover that it is actually empty. Doing Zhiné practice helps. A good prolonged session of Zhiné helps you discover this; direct observation also helps you discover it. When you discover emptiness, there is a possibility that you will fall into the experience of nihilism, like people who have been disappointed many times in their lives: they lose light, hope, joy, laughter, humor; in a way, they have fallen into nihilism —they no longer see anything, they have not found what they wanted to see, and then they think there is nothing more to see. For them, emptiness becomes something dark, and they get lost internally.

In meditation, there is a possibility that this may happen; you say: “there is nothing,” but it is not that there is nothing; in emptiness—in space—there is everything. Realize that in the space you have discovered, there is the presence of clear light, that clear light is inseparable from the space that contains all potentiality.

Emptiness is not nothingness, but rather there is a fullness in it, there is clear light. Try only to be conscious of that light, of that open awakened consciousness. This basically means that when experiencing the mind as empty, you realize the full and clear light that is in it; this is clear light, and that is enough.

When you discover that the mind is empty, you realize that it is not separate from clear light; when you discover clear light or open awakened consciousness in emptiness, you see that both are united. Try to experience that.

“Clear light is union” basically means that what is empty is clear, and what is clear is empty. You cannot have the experience of clarity without emptiness, and you cannot experience emptiness without clarity. So it is very important to experience union, inseparability. That union is the origin of all qualities, of all joy and supreme bliss. Allow joy to arise from union; when you feel it, feel it more strongly, more closely, more familiarly.

The experience of joy can only be had when we have a lot of energy and at the same time maintain the connection, that is, when we do not disconnect from ourselves. The

When we can relate to the external without losing our connection to ourselves, this is the most beautiful experience. The most beautiful way we can live is when we are connected to everything and at the same time are totally connected to ourselves.

The opposite example to that of a person who has many things is the person who, to find themselves, seeks to disconnect from everything: from family, from business, from school. It’s not that this situation in itself is a problem, but we must be careful not to go too far. Sometimes it’s good to step away; it’s a human need: you are looking for yourself, and for that, you leave your environment. But you can find yourself within the environment that surrounds you; you can find yourself in the place where you have the most life experiences; you can find yourself where the world is most familiar to you, but you go into a world that is not so familiar to you as an adventure. Sometimes it is necessary to do that, and it is fine; but cutting ties and leaving is not necessarily the solution to finding oneself.

In Dzogchen, it is said that the experience of bliss is not the natural state of the mind; neither is the experience of emptiness nor the experience of clarity. These are just experiences; beyond them, we can connect with the one who has the experience; that is the nature of the mind, and from there we can connect with everything. If we only connect with the experience, we cut off or lose the connection with this unique truth.

If we have the experience of bliss, if we are in rigpa, if we allow ourselves to have the experience, but without being attached or identified with it, experiences can be very freeing; or they can become blocked: for example, if a very beautiful rainbow appears, what do we see? Naturally, we see something that is beautiful, and immediately afterward, a part of attachment or the idea of permanence begins to appear: "Where is the camera? I'm going to get the camera!", but we are not sure if it is where we think, if we know where we left it, if it has film, or if it will work. And all these things become problems. We can simply enjoy the rainbow, but if all this other stuff comes into play, then we can no longer enjoy it, because we are too busy looking for the camera and have stopped seeing the rainbow.

So, if the rainbow is there, which is very beautiful, enjoy it; when the rainbow dissolves, enjoy the beauty of the sky. Every moment the world is waiting for us to enjoy it, but we are constantly trying to leave a real world for an unreal world with which we fantasize. We keep our photo, but we have lost the real rainbow. To avoid being victims of experience, we must be present in the experience; the moment we have the experience, we release it and are ready for the next experience. I know it is difficult to be free in this way, but at least we can be less blocked.

In Dzogchen, it is said: "What is needed is unlimited perspective." This is something very magical; it means being open to the circumstances we are in. And this leads us to so many different places and so many beautiful circumstances, if we can remain open! Sometimes we even find beauty in what we don't normally think is beautiful. For example: we have an appointment with our ex-husband or ex-wife, and attending it is something we don't want to do but have to. So we schedule the appointment, which is for Monday from eleven to twelve, and we are not in a good mood; but life has put us in this situation, and we could make something very beautiful out of it. We could make it so that during that hour all the long-standing disputes soften, so that we could leave that meeting saying, "Well, yes, I used to fight a lot with this person, but she's not so bad!" We could make that hour a beautiful experience, even take away the gift of that memory. We have already chosen to meet, and then it's about really meeting; otherwise, why did we make the appointment? The meeting is an opportunity to improve; I don't understand why make the appointment if you don't have that intention. I understand it's not easy, but at that moment when we are face to face, we can realize that we chose to be there for an hour and that what we want is to make

peace with that person, not to start seeing in her all the strange things that always irritated us: how she drinks tea or how she talks about the weather; which is like instantly elaborating a vision in which all the things that irritated us appear, as if they were still there, identical.

Every moment can be beautiful, even if it is a difficult moment, because, as the Dzogchen teaching says, one can have the experience of space everywhere. When we cry, we can have the experience of space; when we love, we can have the experience of space; when we feel pain, we can have the experience of space. That is why some people, in certain circumstances, are sometimes told: "You must be very sad," or "You must be very tired," but they are not, and this is because they can have the experience of things in space.

Understand that every moment is for enjoying it, and if you couldn't enjoy it, then understand that in every moment it is possible to heal what could not be healed before. This is a perspective that gives a lot of strength. Perhaps you say to yourself: "My problem is that I regret things later"; for example, in the case of the rainbow: "Later I will regret taking the photo"; "I should have done this, I should have done that," and "Why did I do this and not that?" The answer would be: it doesn't matter! Every moment is for enjoying it. And if I see this moment as a moment to enjoy it, I don't start thinking about what I didn't do at lunchtime, but rather I am in this moment to enjoy it and to heal. And if someone comes to remind me of what I did and what I didn't do, I say: "Leave me alone"; I don't want to hear it because I want to be in this moment.

The mantra of Dzogchen is "as it is," and it is with this "as it is" that we connect. Absolutely everything is in that quality; we find everything there. And you will be surprised to see how many beautiful things there are in that "as it is."

So, how do we find ourselves? We find ourselves in this very moment: we already are. We don't need to struggle to become something we wish we were. What we are is already complete in this moment; what we are is simple, it is clear, it permeates everything, it is full of potential for anything to arise in the next moment. And what are we? A pure being, a being that permeates everything, a being full of potential, connected to itself and to the world. We can find ourselves right here where we are; we don't need to go anywhere else to find ourselves. It is very important to understand this so as not to elaborate, not to change, not to reject, not to flee, not to withdraw: "it is as it is."

As it is said in Dzogchen: "remain in what is."

When we are in that state, there is a part of our thinking that tries to say something, to call our attention, to distract us. If we pay attention, we will spend our time fighting against little military officers, we will spend our time engrossed in these little battles and never touch base. When we are in space, we have no need for protection or defense, because space cannot be destroyed. When we

reach this level, we reach the quality of indestructibility, which is the most powerful state that can be achieved through meditation.

In Dzogchen teachings, it is said that "we should expect nothing"; but of course, this is very difficult, because we have been preparing for a retreat for months, and it is impossible to expect nothing, but we try not to expect. Then, when we do a dark retreat, we have many experiences, and these can be very incredible; but we are not supposed to label them. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche constantly told me: "Don't get particularly emotional when you have experiences," and by this, he meant reactions like saying, "Oh, what a good practitioner I am!" or "Why is this happening to me?" because thinking like that is precisely what is inappropriate; it is equivalent to missing the main point: the moment we do this, the experience vanishes. So, even though it is natural to do so, we must try not to judge or label it. If we get very emotional about an experience, we lose it. If we try to put a name to the experience, the moment we name it, the experience is gone, it is lost.

If we are not inspired by nature, by plants, by colors, what can we expect? Immediately we go to a place of pain. This is completely natural. There are people who always say: "Why am I always thinking about this? Why am I always stuck on this?" and they are necessarily like that because they have no other source of inspiration, they can see nothing else. Of course, when a person is stuck in this situation, they are stuck there.

When we find ourselves in a difficult situation, we can elevate ourselves to a broader perspective. For example, if we have a problem with a person, we can stop focusing on everything that person does: when they come in, when they go out, what they are going to do, what they are going to say... Or, for example, if at a party where many people are invited, there is one person we don't like, aren't the other hundred people, who are pleasant, enough to counteract her? There are so many beautiful things! but we focus on the one we don't like. Why not enjoy everything else? So, raise your perspective a little and enjoy—this requires inspiration.

Union is great bliss. When do you feel happy? True happiness comes from the union of space and open, awakened consciousness. Infinite freedom and the experience of realizing this become bliss. In general, union is bliss, union is always bliss: the union of man and woman, of method and wisdom, the idea of balance, yin and yang, always. When things are balanced and there is a sense of union in them, that union always produces bliss. Thus, supreme bliss is the experience of the inseparability of space and open, awakened consciousness.

Connect with that joy, with that bliss; generate a strong connection with it; remain in the inseparability of emptiness and awakened consciousness.

The experience of open, awakened consciousness is light. Openness, space is the basis, emptiness: remain in the inseparability of emptiness and clarity.

V THE FOUR EXCELLENCES

CHAPTER 16

THE FOUR EXCELLENCES

187

188 »»» THE FOUR EXCELLENCES

Leg pa shi dam ngag tob té

De yang dzin mé gyi nang wa rang drol la Chog mé gyi ring pa gya yen du tong dang Tang pa dé ka leg yin gyi

Mig mé gyi gom pa rang sel la Ne mé gyi nyam nyong ka yen du chong dang Kyong pa dé ka leg pa yin gyi

Chag mé gyi chód pa lhug pa la Kar bé gyi nang wa té kar chó dang Ché pa dé ka leg pa yin gyi

Mig mé gyi gom pa rang sel la Ne mé gyi nyam nyong ka yen du chong dang Kyong pa dé ka leg pa yin gyi

THE FOUR EXCELLENCES ++» 119

The Four Excellences (Spanish translation)

The illuminating of appearances is naturally free and devoid of fixations.

Release appearances without restriction or polarization in awakened consciousness.

This letting go is itself excellent.

Meditation (experience) is naturally radiant in the absence of reference and objectification.

Remain in the experience, totally vast and without reference.

This remaining in itself is excellent.

Behavior is free and spontaneous in the absence of attachment.

Be sharp when encountering any appearance that arises.

This sharpness is itself excellent.

The result occurs naturally when you have no desire for achievement. Free yourself from all projection generated by hope and fear.

This freedom is itself excellent.

The instruction of the Four Excellences [legpa zhi nam dak, legs pa bzhi nam dak], which is part of the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud, is one of the essential teachings of Dzogchen. This teaching is more related to perspective than to method. There are thousands of teachings that focus more externally and attempt to produce changes in a more external, conceptual, and progressive manner; such is the approach of the lower vehicles, for example. However, the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud cycle of teachings is not like that: it is about you, your mind, and your nature; for this reason, it is unique and special. Since these teachings are perspective-oriented, they do not contain many references to qualities like love or compassion; this does not mean that the prajnaparamitas* are unimportant in certain situations and for practitioners. In fact, all qualities are spontaneously perfected in Dharmakaya; they are latent there and only manifest when required.

In Dzogchen, we go to the very root of illusion, of deception— ignorance—which is more important than emphasizing a single quality.

The masters Tapihritsa and Nangzher Lodpo are known as generous because they attained realization and bequeathed to us the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud, a series of teachings in a language understandable to us. Once enlightened, Tapihritsa returned to the world to teach Nangzher Lodpo the Four Excellences because this essential instruction was all he required to attain realization. This teaching consists of twelve lines, referring respectively to perspective, meditation, behavior, and fruit.

First Excellence Perspective

The illuminating of appearances is naturally free and devoid of fixations.

Release appearances without restriction

or polarization in awakened consciousness. This letting go is itself excellent.

As I mentioned earlier, perspective in Dzogchen has to do with the wisdom of emptiness; therefore, it is an open and unlimited perspective.

Limited perspective has much to do with the mind that attaches. If you manage not to attach to appearances, they release themselves; when you attach to visions or appearances, they seem incapable of self-liberation. The more you attach to

them, the more "famous" they become; you create this situation by attaching so much to them. For example: how many people are there in your life who are the opposite of your "famous person"? Most of them. You are free from them, and they are free from you, and this is because you are not attached to them, nor they to you.

Think of an example from your own life where you have much attachment. Can you perceive the fact that you are attached? Attachment is the opposite of this first excellence. When you attach, the vision or appearance to which you attach seems to be hanging onto you; your mind is not free. How can you free your mind to rest in a free world if you do not have a real will to let go, to release?

It is always possible to work on a simple level with our own experience. Observe a given situation: become aware, do not attach, let the situation be freely.

Think of a person, experience, or situation to which you do not wish to attach; simply make room for it, allow it to be. At that moment, your mind will be freed from it; it will cease to attach.

The mind is free; allow it to rest in free space. If you can do this, then you can go even further and achieve more. The next thing you must address is that which you do not feel capable of doing. Ultimately, when we speak of liberation, we refer to liberation from everything.

Life is like a flow: make room for many experiences; live them and do not attach to them. Deep down, you know that you are not who you believe yourself to be today. If you look back ten years, you are not the same person you were then, and you will not be the same person in ten years that you are today. You are not that identity you believe yourself to be; you identify with the roles you play now, and that identity is the basis of your experiences: if you feel good, you feel good because of it, and if you feel bad, that identity is what makes you feel bad. Identity is changing: it has been changing and will continue to change. We believe in that identity as firmly as we believe in our problems. And if our problems block us, it is due to our firm belief in that identity and because through it we attach to people, things, situations, etc. In Buddhism, we speak of impermanence, of change; it is surprising how everything changes, and we move through those changes and make room for them. The moment you think something should not change, you are in trouble. Change is natural. Allowing changes to occur is your gain, your freedom.

The excellence of perspective has to do with the wisdom of emptiness. Perspective must be open; when you do not attach to visions or appearances, they release

themselves. This is what in Dzogchen is called "unlimited perspective," fullness. The text of The Four Excellences says: "When you do not attach, you are in the nature of the mind; the mind is always spacious." The natural mind is like this: free of direction, unlimited. Allow your mind to be free in the free world. This is perspective.

Second Excellence Meditation

Meditation (experience) is naturally radiant in the absence of reference and objectification. Remain in the experience, totally vast and without reference. This remaining in itself is excellent.

Meditation is an experience, a result of perspective. You have a particular perspective, and through it, you have a specific experience. Thus, experience is meditation. Perspective is not meditation, but you meditate through your perspective, and if it is erroneous, you live a bad experience; if it is open, you live a clear experience. And if your experience is clear, you are open and allow for greater potentiality for your experience. Conversely, if your perspective is conditioned, your experience is also conditioned, and if you have a conditioned experience, then you may feel uncomfortable or experience suffering.

The second excellence has to do with meditation. When meditating, it is necessary not to attach to the experience. A good meditation is one that happens by itself, not one that you force to occur. When you force it to occur, you are attaching; you are not in the natural state but in the conceptual mind.

Meditation is naturally radiant, without a particular focus. Once one has the perspective, meditation happens by itself.

For example, to feel good and free from your "famous person" you need to have the correct perspective: there is no substance in you or in it, and this is a rest—the object dissolves, the subject also dissolves. What remains then? The inseparability of emptiness and clarity. Clarity, light, is present because the obscuring object has dissolved; it is present clearly, spontaneously, effortlessly. That is why it is said here that, without a particular focus, meditation is "naturally radiant"; it is natural because it involves no effort, and it is radiant because there are no obscurations: subject and object are clear, radiant.

When you experience that clarity, that is called meditation. It is good that this clarity arises, and it arises because you are allowing it, and the fact that you allow it means you are not attaching. Do not attach to that clarity either.

Similarly, for example, pain can arise when your perspective is limited. Pain is like erroneous meditation: when you suffer pain spontaneously and effortlessly, and it is present in the morning, in the afternoon, at night; you do nothing to make it arise, but it arises as a result of your perspective: if you did not have that

perspective, you would not have that pain. Thus, it is clear that experience is the result of perspective. If, instead, you have a good experience and say to yourself, "This is great," that is enough for your mind to generate attachment. A good meditation is one that occurs when you are able to allow it without attaching to it, so simply allow it.

Third Excellence Behavior

Behavior is free and spontaneous in the absence of attachment.

Be sharp when encountering any appearance that arises.

This sharpness is itself excellent.

In the instruction of the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud, there are examples of masters that will probably seem somewhat strange to us because their behavior is like that of a child, or like that of a deranged person, or even like that of dogs or pigs, which eat everything indiscriminately. These are behaviors characteristic of certain enlightened masters; however, this does not mean that you have to behave in the same way; these are metaphors. And since you are not enlightened, you could not behave that way, but you also do not need to question it.

Such behavior speaks of a certain level of flexibility.

When you admire a person for their flexibility, that may be an indication that you lack it; the fact of realizing this is what can lead you to admire them. Conversely, there are people who are capable of finding problems even in nirvana itself; they find problems in all situations. When you find yourself between these two extremes, you can perceive that the flexible person is happier than you, and conversely, that the inflexible person suffers more than you. The difference between these two people lies in their perspective. Internally, the person who is very flexible is happy, free, and open, and their experience of themselves is fluid and radiant.

Behavior has to do with how you face a situation. When your car breaks down and you have no gas, food, or water, you can see how flexible or inflexible you are.

Those people who are naturally happy and content see the world in an open way and therefore experience themselves in a very open way, so when they find themselves in certain life situations, they live them from that openness, without any particular expectations.

Many times, when a person complains about another, they are actually complaining about themselves. When you manage to perceive this, you find more skills and means to perceive it in yourself. So, when you return home irritated and complain to your family, you suddenly realize your state and tell yourself that your complaints have nothing to do with your family but that you are in a bad mood that day. Realizing this helps a lot: you stop interacting with them and spreading your bad mood at home; you go for a walk, to the movies, and stop interacting. Otherwise, you can attribute the cause of your bad mood to another person and make a very solid idea out of it, which does not help. If, on the contrary, you realize that that other person does such-and-such that bothers you, or complains about you, you know that they do it because they are suffering, because they are going through difficulties, that they need help; so, instead of feeling personally attacked, you feel more compassion, you know that their behavior has nothing to do with you but that the person is simply expressing their suffering, and then you can help them. This is what happens with professionals like doctors, who sometimes have to deal with deranged people: they do not take it personally, and because of that, they can help.

Be capable of being in any experience that arises in a given situation. There is a difference between taking charge of something and going crazy over it; going crazy is not useful. However, we must take charge of that matter. In some situations, you can say "no" in such a way that the other person feels happy and respects you at the same time; it is not necessary to say "yes" to everything. Be capable of being sincere in your speech.

Fourth Excellence The Result

The result occurs naturally when you have no desire for achievement. Free yourself from all projection generated by hope and fear.

This freedom is itself excellent.

The result, the fruit, arises on its own; there is nothing to achieve; it is beyond hope and fear. In Dzogchen, it is often said: "The result is already there; there is nothing to achieve." This means that you do not produce the result. Do you, for example, produce supreme bliss? No, it is already there; you simply discover what is already there.

It is necessary that you find yourself free from desiring, from hoping, from fearing, from having.

When you overcome hope and fear, the result is there by itself. There is a line from the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud that says: "Overcoming hope and fear is the result, it is the fruit. Bliss is there naturally when you have no hope or fear."

Thus, in Dzogchen, perspective is unlimited; meditation is spontaneous; behavior is flexible, and the result exists naturally and effortlessly.

CONCLUSION

In all Dzogchen traditions, these teachings have historically been kept very secret, and certain aspects of the teachings have been shared only individually, from master to disciple. However, my own master Yongdzin Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche advised me to share these teachings openly to increase the possibility of their survival.

From my perspective, to help the survival of these teachings:

The purity of this lineage must be preserved. The lineage chain must remain unbroken. Initiations, transmissions, and specifications of the instructions must remain pure and unchanged. The knowledge shared and the experience of Dzogchen must remain genuine. There are many serious and committed Dzogchen students who are following this path. Even so, after 20 years of teaching, I realize that the aforementioned way is not for everyone. You can certainly practice Dzogchen without strictly adhering to ancient culture and traditions; you can awaken your own true nature without following an existing lineage or teaching method: Dzogchen wisdom and knowledge exist in other forms, and it is formless.

I believe that for most Westerners, the practice of Dzogchen is the best practice. It allows one to connect directly with one's own being and realize one's true nature without struggling too much with all the forms.

CONCLUSION

APPENDIX

Guru yoga

Guru yoga is an essential practice in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bön, in the teachings of Sutra and Tantra, as well as in Dzogchen. The practice develops a heart connection with the master; by continuously strengthening our devotion, we reach the place of pure devotion within us, which is the powerful and unshakeable foundation of the practice. The essence of Guru yoga is to unite the practitioner's mind with that of the master.

What is the true master? It is the fundamental, formless nature of the mind, the primordial consciousness at the basis of everything. However, as we exist in a dualistic world, it helps us to visualize that nature with a specific form. By doing

so, we skillfully use the dualism of the conceptual mind to further strengthen devotion and to help us remain focused on the practice and on the creation of positive qualities.

In the Bön tradition, we often visualize Tapihritsa as the master, or Buddha Shenla Odkar, who represents the union of all masters. If you are already a practitioner, perhaps you have another deity you visualize, such as Guru Rinpoche, a Yidam*, or a Khandro. Although it is important to work with the lineage with which one has a connection, you must also understand that the master you visualize embodies all the masters with whom you have established a bond, all those with whom you have studied, and all the deities with whom you are engaged. The master in Guru yoga is not merely an individual but the essence of enlightenment; the primordial consciousness that is your true nature.

The master is also the one from whom you receive teachings. In the Tibetan tradition, we say that the master is more important than the Buddha. Why? Because the master is the direct messenger of the teachings, the one who brings the Buddha's wisdom to the student. Without the master, we could not find the path to the Buddha. Therefore, we must feel as much devotion towards the master as we would towards the Buddha if he were to suddenly appear before us.

In Guru yoga, one does not practice merely to generate a feeling towards a visualized image, but to find within oneself the fundamental mind, which is the same as the fundamental mind of all your masters and all the Buddhas and realized beings who have lived. When you unite with the Guru, you unite with your true, pristine nature, which is the true guide and master. But this should not be an abstract practice: when you practice Guru yoga, try to feel such intense devotion that the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end, tears roll down your cheeks, and your heart opens and fills with love. Allow yourself to enter into union with the mind of the Guru*, which is your enlightened buddha nature. This is the way to practice Guru yoga.

APPENDIX

The Practice

After the nine breaths, still seated in the meditation posture, visualize the master in front and above you. It does not have to be a flat, two-dimensional picture; allow a real, three-dimensional being to manifest, made of pure light and with a strong presence that affects your body's sensations, your energy, and your mind. Generate intense devotion and reflect on the great gift that the teachings are and the immense fortune you enjoy by having a connection with them. Offer a sincere

prayer, asking for your negativities and obscurations to dissolve, and for your positive qualities to develop.

Subsequently, imagine receiving blessings from your master in the form of three colored lights flowing from their three wisdom doors—body, speech, and mind—towards yours. The lights should be transmitted in the following sequence: white light flowing from the master's forehead chakra to yours, purifying and blessing your entire body and physical dimension. Then, a red light flowing from the master's throat chakra to yours, purifying and blessing your energetic dimension. Finally, a blue light flowing from the master's heart chakra to yours, purifying and blessing your mind.

When the lights enter your body, feel them. Allow your body, energy, and mind to be filled with the light of wisdom. Use your imagination to make the blessing real in the totality of your experience, in your body and energy, as well as in the images of your mind.

After receiving the blessing, imagine the master dissolving into a light that penetrates your heart and remains there as your deepest essence. Imagine yourself dissolving into that light and remaining in pure consciousness, rigpa.

There are more elaborate instructions for Guru yoga that may involve prostrations, offerings, gestures, mantras, and more complicated visualizations. But the essence of the practice is to unite your mind with that of the master, which is pure, non-dual consciousness. Guru yoga can be practiced at any time of the day; the more frequently you do it, the better. Many masters say that of all practices, Guru yoga is the most important. It confers the blessings of the lineage and can open and soften the heart and quiet the chaotic mind. To completely achieve the practice of Guru yoga is to achieve the path.

GLOSSARY

A Pure sound. The seed syllable related to space, to emptiness. This syllable relates to Dharmakaya and represents the immutable state of being. Through its sound, we seek our inner space where all qualities are present, openness, and connection with ourselves.

A-tri (Tib. A-Khrid). Guide of the A. One of the three main Dzogchen lineages of the Bön tradition.

Bardo (Tib., bar do; Sans., antarabhava). Bardo means "intermediate state" and refers to any transitional state in existence: life, meditation, sleep, death. However, it is generally used to refer to the intermediate state between death and rebirth.

Bön (Tib., [bon], Tib., [chos]; Sans. Dharma). It is the original spiritual tradition of Tibet that predates Buddhism from India. Its origins in our world are located in Olmo Lungring, part of the territory of Tazig. Later, this tradition expanded to the country called Zhang Zhung, conquered and annexed by Tibet (see Zhang Zhung). The Bön tradition has uninterrupted lineages dating back 18,000 years. It is characterized by different iconography, a rich shamanistic tradition, as well as teachings of Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen, and all lineages that come from Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche. Historically, Bön is divided into three stages of development: 1) Primitive Bön, related to rituals and elements, corresponds to the ancient shamanism and animism of North Asia. It represents Tibetan culture prior to the influences of Yungdrung Bön. 2) Yungdrung Bön contains all the teachings of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab. It is the spiritual path to enlightenment taught by Tonpa Shenrab in Tazig (Central Asia) and which later spread to Zhang Zhung (Western Tibet), from where it was adopted in Central Tibet where it flourished and remains to this day. 3) New Bön, a product of the fusion of Bön with teachings originating from India. It appeared in the 15th century and is very similar to the teachings of the Nyingmapa. Yungdrung Bön possesses teachings classified as The Nine Vehicles of Bön, where the first four are causal, the following four are vehicles of result, and the last refers to Dzogchen teachings (see Vehicles of Bön).

Bonku See Dharmakaya.

Bu (Tib.) The Son. Wisdom originating from oneself, primordial awakened consciousness. The clarity of primordial consciousness present in internal and external appearances, the basis of changing manifestations. It is the true nature of the mind, instantaneous pure presence. The inseparable son of the mother (ma), of emptiness. It is also known as clear light, rigpa, clarity.

Buddha (Sans., Pali)/(Tib., sangye [sang gyel). Literally: "the awakened one." Buddhas are fully realized enlightened beings in the Trikaya. They achieve complete liberation from the cycle of samsara (death and rebirth). In Tibetan, sang means "pure" and gye means "expanded."

Channel (Tib.: rtsa, [rtsal]; Sans.: nadi). Channels are the "veins" of the body's energy circulation system; subtle energy currents that sustain and stimulate life flow through them. Channels are not found in the physical dimension but in the energetic one; however, individuals can become aware of them through practices to develop natural sensitivity.

Chakra (Tib.: khor-lo, [khor lo]; Sans.: chakra). Literally, "wheel" or "circle." Chakra is a Sanskrit word referring to energy centers in the body. A chakra is a place in the body where several energy channels (154) meet. Chakras are used in various practices.

Dakini See Khandro.

Dedication of Merit Compassionate and selfless offering of one's accumulated merits for the benefit of other beings. Unlike merit generated for oneself, which can degrade, dedicated merit is definitive and cannot be lost.

Dharma Spiritual teaching. See Bön.

Dharmakaya (Tib.: bon ku | chos ku, [bon sku | chos sku]; Sans.: dharma- kaya). The non-dual essence, it is free of concepts and free of form and any characteristic. It is the emptiness that contains everything. It is said that a buddha possesses three bodies (kayas): dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya. Dharmakaya, often translated as "the body of truth," "the body of Dharma," is the emptiness of the natural state of reality.

Dzogku. See Sambhogakaya.

Dzogchen (Tib.: [rdzogs chen]). The "Great Perfection" or "Great Fullness." Dzogchen is considered the highest teaching and practice of both the Bön and Nyingma schools in Tibetan Buddhism. It is called "the great single sphere" and is described with three aspects: the basis, the path, and the fruit. Basis because the foundation of Dzogchen is the primordial state of the mind; path because Dzogchen is the supreme and direct path to realization; and fruit because Dzogchen is the consummation of enlightenment. The essential practice of Dzogchen is "self-liberation": allowing everything that arises in experience to exist as it is, without any elaboration by the conceptual mind and without coveting or rejecting it.

Dzogchenpa Dzogchen practitioner.

Emptiness (Tib.: stong pa nyid; Sans.: shunyata). The absence of inherent existence.

Esfera única, or verdad única (see Dzogchen).

Five [pure] lights (Tib. nga- 'Od Inga) They are the source of the five elements, the underlying structure of the world's structure and the individual's internal existence. The energy of the five pure lights arises in the primordial basis.

Guru See Lama.

Guru yoga A practice essential in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bön, in the teachings of Sutra and Tantra, as well as in Dzogchen. The practice develops a heart connection with the master; by continuously strengthening our devotion, we reach the place of pure devotion within us, which is the powerful and unshakeable foundation of the practice. The essence of Guru yoga is to unite the practitioner's mind with that of the master.

Huella kármica (Tib.: bag-chag [bag chags)). Any action—physical, verbal, or mental—that an individual performs with a certain intention or even with the slightest aversion or desire, leaves a trace in the individual's mental continuum. The accumulation of these karmic traces conditions each moment of that individual's experience in a positive or negative way.

Hung Seed syllable representing the inseparability of clarity and emptiness.

Jalu (Tib.: [ja lus). The "rainbow body." The sign of full realization in Dzogchen is the attainment of the rainbow body. Realized Dzogchen practitioners—who are no longer deceived by the apparent substantiality of dualisms such as mind and matter—release, at the moment of death, the energy of the elements that constitute the physical body. The practitioner consciously enters the process of death, dissolving their physical body.

Karma (Tib.: las, [las]; Sans.: karma). Literally means "action." It is useful to think of karma as a process of cause and effect. Any action performed physically, verbally, or mentally serves as a "seed" that will bear the "fruit" of its consequences in the future, when the propitious conditions for its manifestation arise. Negative actions have negative effects, such as unhappiness. Positive karma is the result of virtuous actions and sows the seed of compassion, which includes all qualities. Karma does not mean that life is predetermined, but that present conditions always arise from past actions. See also karmic trace.

Kaya (Tib.: ku, [sku]). It has various meanings. In the context of this book, it means "body" or "dimension of experience." See trikaya.

Khandro or khandroma (Tib. mkhagro ma; Sans., dakini) Literally in Tibetan: "celestial traveler." Sky refers to emptiness, the space in which the khandro travels. That is, she acts in the full realization of emptiness, of absolute reality. A khandro can be a human woman who has recognized her true nature or an enlightened deity. Khandro also refers to a class of beings born in the pure realm of the khandros.

Khata Comes from the word "kadag" which means "primordial purity." Khata is a strip of cloth that represents our true nature. Symbolically, practitioners offer a khata to Masters as a sign of their devotion, and they return it along with their blessings.

Kuntu Zangpo (Tib. [kun tu bzang po] | (Sans.) Samantabhadra). Primordial Buddha. Corresponds to the dimension of bonku (Dharmakaya).

Kunzbi (Tib.: [kun gzhí], Sans.: alaya). In Bön, kunzhi is the basis of everything and corresponds to self-arising wisdom and the principle of enlightenment. It has the quality of permeating everything. It is symbolized by the boundless space of

extension and direction. It is not synonymous with the term kunzhi namshe (see below).

Kunzbi namshe (Tib.: [kun gzhi rnam shes]; Sans.: alaya vijnana). It is the basic consciousness of the individual. It is the "deposit" or "storehouse" where karmic traces are kept, and from which future experiences arise.

Lama (Tib., bla ma; Sans., guru). Lama literally means "supreme mother." Lama refers to the spiritual master or mistress, who is of primordial importance to the student and practitioner. In the Tibetan tradition, the lama is considered more important than the buddha, as it is he who provides living teachings to the student. At the highest level, the lama is one's own buddha nature, and at the relative level, it is the personal master.

Lbag tong (Tib.) Direct and profound experience of the natural state.

Lhun drup (Tib.: [lhun grub]). Spontaneous perfection or spontaneous presence. In Dzogchen, it refers to the incessant and spontaneous manifestation of phenomena.

Lo (Tib. bLo) Mind. In the Dzogchen context, it refers to the intellectual aspect of the mind.

Loka (Tib. Jig-en/rig, jig rten/rigs). Literally, "world" or "world system." In the West, it is used to refer to the six realms of cyclic existence; but in reality, loka refers to major world systems, one of which is that of the six realms. (See realms of cyclic existence, six).

Lópon Principal master of the tradition. The director in charge of the education of young lamas in Bön monasteries.

Lópon Sangye Tenzin Accomplished Master of Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen. Lópon Sangye Tenzin lived a very simple life, yet he was considered by many to be the foremost Bön scholar of his generation. Lópon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche was the master of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak (see) and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and was known for his extremely direct, clear, and strict teaching style. As Tenzin Rinpoche's first root master, Lópon Sangye Tenzin imparted the formal teachings of the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud (Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung; see) to Tenzin Rinpoche. A few months later, he fell gravely ill and asked Yongdzin Rinpoche to replace him as Lópon (see Lópon) at the monastery. After his death in 1977, his savings were used—as he wished—to found the school of dialectic.

Ma The mother. The basis of the primordial state. Ma is kunzhi (see kunzhi). It is a symbol of the emptiness of the natural state.

Mala A string made of different materials for counting pronounced mantras. The large bead at the end of the mala symbolizes the wisdom of emptiness, and the

round or cylindrical beads symbolize emptiness itself. All together they represent the overcoming of all obstacles. The Buddhist mala has 108 beads.

Natural Mind See Mind, natural.

Nang wa (Tib. snang ba) Vision. It includes every perception, sensation, mental and emotional event, as well as everything that appears external to us. It is what we "see" as experience; it is our experience.

Nature of the mind See Mind, natural.

Nangzher Lodpo, Gyerpung He was the 26th Master of the unbroken lineage of Zhang Zhung Nyyen Gyu. He lived in the 8th century AD, when Tibet and Zhang Zhung were no longer two separate countries. His conquest was completed around 640 AD, during the reign of Emperor Srongtsen Gampo, although the occupation occurred during the reign of Emperor Trisong Detsen (642-797). In its time, Zhang Zhung comprised the lands of Western Tibet and parts of the northern Tibetan plateau. Its capital was Khyunglung Ngulkhar ("The Silver Palace of the Garuda Valley"), located west of Mount Kailash. The last king of Zhang Zhung was Ligmincha (Ligmirya), murdered by Trisong Detsen.

Nirmanakaya (Tib.: tul-ku, [sprul sku]; Sans.: nirmanakaya). Nirmanakaya is the "emanation body" of dharmakaya. It is the movement of energy in the inseparability of emptiness and clarity.

Nirvana (Tib.: mya-ngen las de-pa, [mya ngan las das pal; Sans.: nirvana). The transcendence of all suffering. This term is given different emphasis in the various schools of Bön and Buddhism. Generally, it is understood as the opposite of samsara, conditioned existence, subject to pain and sorrow.

Om Seed syllable representing the incessant nature (of the qualities that are always present within us) and is related to the qualities of dzog ku (Sambhogakaya).

Paramitas (Sans.) The Ten Perfections or virtues, which are: compassion, patience, joyful effort, generosity, prayer, wisdom, discipline, samadhi (practice), method, and power.

Pé (Tib.: Phar) Sacred syllable or sound used in various Dzogchen practices, primarily helping to cut off the continuous internal discourse of the intellectual mind.

Prajnaparamita (Sans.). See paramitas.

Realms of cyclic existence, Six (Tib., rig-drug, rigs-drug). Commonly known as the "six realms" or the "six lokas" (see loka). The six realms refer to six classes of beings: gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. Beings

in these six realms are subject to suffering. They are literally realms in which beings are born, as well as experiential and affective specters that limit and shape potential experience in our lives.

Rigpa (Tib.: [rig pa]; Sans.: vidya). Literally, "awakened consciousness." In Dzogchen teachings, rigpa refers to innate, primordial, pure, non-dual consciousness, which, in union with kunzhi (see kunzhi), emptiness, is the true nature, the natural state of the mind.

Rinpoche (Tib.) [rin po che]. Literally: "the precious one," "precious jewel." An honorific title used when addressing an incarnate lama. It commonly refers to a spiritual master with recognized achievements on the path of dharma (see dharma).

Sabor único (Tib.: ro chig, ro cig) The non-dual essence. See also Dharmakaya.

Samantabhadra. See Kuntu Zangpo.

Sambhogakaya (Sans.)/(Tib.) dzog ku [rdzogs ku] The "bliss body" of the buddha. Sambhogakaya is a body made entirely of light. It is the clarity or alert consciousness of the natural state in emptiness, the dimension of energy. Here, the three great visions manifest: sound, light, and rays. Sambhogakaya is the potential quality of manifestation of the movement of sound, light, and rays. It is usually visualized in Tantric and Sutric practices in the form of deities endowed with attributes and ornaments, while in Dzogchen, the image of Kuntu Zangpo or Tapihritsa, representing Dharmakaya, is generally visualized.

Samsara (Tib.: khor-wa, ['khor ba]; Sans.: samsara). The realm of suffering that arises from the dualistic and limited mind, in which all entities are impermanent and lack inherent existence, and where all sentient beings are subject to suffering. Samsara includes the six realms of cyclic existence (loka), but in a broader sense refers to the characteristic mode of existence of sentient beings who suffer from being trapped in the illusions of ignorance and duality. Samsara ends when a being is completely liberated from ignorance.

Sem (Tib.: [sems]; Sans.: citta). One of the multiple Tibetan terms for "mind." Sem is usually translated as "conceptual mind," and it refers to the changing mind, rather than the nature of the mind.

Sem yi (Tib.: [sems nyid]) See Mind, natural.

Shenla Odkar (Tib., Shenlha Wokar, gShen lha 'od dkar). Shenla Odkar is the sambhogakaya manifestation of Shenrab Miwoche, the buddha who founded the Bön tradition.

Sherab Chamma The Loving Mother of Wisdom.

Stupa (Sans.) | (Tib. chorten [mchod rten]) Sacred monument that often contains relics of saints and sacred texts. It is built according to universal principles of harmony and order. It is often large; it concentrates and radiates healing energy to the six realms (lokas) of existence. They symbolize the enlightened mind. Yungdrung Kóleg Chorten, the best-known image of a Bön stupa, is one of the 360 images described in the biography of Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche known as Zhij.

Sutra (Sans.)/(Tib. Do [mdo]) In the final cycle of Tonpa Shenrab's teachings, it corresponds to the external precepts. Sutra teachings are based on the path of renouncing poisons and negative emotions (ignorance, attachment, and anger being the main ones).

Ta wa (Tib. lta ba) Perspective. Point of view. The capacity of the individual's mind to see the reality of all phenomena.

Tantra (Tib.: rgyud, [rgyud]; Sans.: tantra). Like sutras, tantras are teachings of the buddhas; but many of them were rediscovered by yogis of the terma tradition (see terma). Tantras are based on the path of transformation and include practices such as working with body energy, consciousness transference, dream yoga, and sleep yoga, among others. Certain classes of tantras, such as those of the non-gradual transformation path, also contain Dzogchen teachings.

Tapihritsa (Tib.: [ta pi hri tsa]). Although considered a historical figure, Tapihritsa is iconographically represented as the Dharmakaya Buddha (see Kuntu Zangpo), in a body of light, surrounded by a rainbow, naked and unadorned, personifying absolute reality. He is one of the two main Dzogchen masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud lineage.

Terma (Tib.) [gter ma] (Tib.) [dgong gter]. Literally: "mind treasure." In Tibetan culture, there is the tradition of termas: sacred objects or texts, texts or teachings hidden by masters of one era for the benefit of later times when the termas will be discovered. Masters who discover termas are known as tertons, treasure discoverers [gter ston]. Termas have been and can be discovered in physical locations such as caves or cemeteries, in elements like water, wood, earth, or space; or received in dreams, during visionary experiences, and finally found in the deep levels of awakened consciousness. The latter is known as gong-ter, "mind treasure."

Togal (Tib.) [thod rgal] Literally: "to traverse" or "to go beyond." One of the two main practices of Dzogchen. The emphasis is on integrating everything that arises. Togal uses vision practices such as dark retreat and practices of contemplating the sky and the sun. The ultimate purpose of this practice is to realize the body of light.

Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche [ston-pa gShen-rab mi-bo-che] The Nirmanakaya Buddha who founded the Bön teachings. According to the traditional biographical account,

in a previous era Shenrab was called Salwa and studied Bön doctrines with his two brothers: Dagpa and Shepa in the paradise Sidpa Yesang, under the guidance of the wise Bön Bumtri Logi Cesan. After finishing their studies, the three brothers visited the God of Compassion—Shenla Odkar—to ask how they could alleviate the suffering of sentient beings. He advised them to act as guides for humanity in the three successive eras of the world: in the past, in the present, and in the future era. Thus, Dagpa taught in the past era, Tonpa Shenrab is the guide and master of the current era, and Shepa will come to instruct in the next era. Tonpa Shenrab descended from the celestial planes and manifested at the foot of Mount Meru. According to mythological literature, there were three cycles of dissemination of the Bön doctrine, in three dimensions: the highest dimension, of gods [lha], the middle dimension of humans [mi], and the lower dimension of nagas [klu]. In the human dimension, Shenrab sent emanations to three continents for the well-being of sentient beings. In this world, he originally imparted his teachings in the region of Olmo Lungring, located northwest of Tibet, and part of a larger territory called Tazig, identified by some modern scholars as Persia or Tazikhistan. See Bön teachings, Vehicles of Bön, and within it, Bön Portals.

Trekchöd (Tib.: trekchöd, kbregs chod). Literally "cutting off" or "severing." One of the two main parts of the Dzogchen practice. The emphasis is on cutting off at the root all distractions and obscurations to be able to dwell in the natural state.

Trikaya. Kaya means "body" or "dimension of experience." According to Bön teachings, the three bodies or dimensions are themselves the buddha state. According to an exclusive explanation from the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud, in the heart there is pure emptiness, which is Dharmakaya; this generates the light, which is Sambhogakaya, and this light communicates with the eyes; the inseparability of the emptiness of the heart and the light generated in the heart is Nirmanakaya, the dimension of manifestation. Thus, the light projected through the eyes (and the other senses) manifests as the three great visions: sound, light, and rays. The Dharmakaya Buddha, Kuntu Zangpo, represents kunzhi, the basis of everything. In that formless, empty space, there is the clear and pure presence that is Sambhogakaya. In the inseparability of formless, empty space and clear presence, movement arises. This is Nirmanakaya. All existence, in the form of the three great visions, derives from the movement of energy in the dimension of Nirmanakaya. See Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya.

Tsal (Tib: rtsal) Energy in its various manifestations.

Tulku. See nirmanakaya.

Upadesha (Sans.; Tib.: man ngag) "Secret instruction." A series of Dzogchen teachings that constitute the cycle of the inseparability of emptiness and clarity.

Vehicles of Bön The first of the cycles of Tonpa Shenrab's teachings. "The Nine Vehicles of Bön" have three different classifications: The Northern Treasures, The

Southern Treasures, and The Central Treasure. The teachings were hidden during the early persecutions of Bön and later rediscovered in the south, north, and center of Tibet, from where the names of the treasures originate. In The Southern Treasures, the Nine Vehicles are divided into: Four Causal Vehicles (lower) [rgyu theg-pa] which contain myths, legends, rituals, and practices concerning primarily energy work related to magic for healing and prosperity, and Five Fruit Vehicles (higher) [bras-bu'i theg-pa] whose purpose is to liberate the practitioner from the cycle of samsaric transmigration. The nine vehicles are: 1) The Vehicle of Shende Practice Prediction, the methods used are: divination [rtsa], astrological and geomantic calculations [rtsis], rituals [gro], medical diagnosis [dpyad], and therapies [sman]. 2) The Vehicle of the Shen of the Manifest World (or of the production of visible signs). This vehicle contains rituals for dealing with the aspects of phenomena, contemplated either as gods [lha] or demons [dre]. The main practices comprise the Four Portals [Gyer], the nine [Ke cong], and the forty-two [Tang rag]. The Four Portals are divided into: a) Black Waters. b) White Waters. c) [Phan yul]. d) Master Guide. 3) The Vehicle of the Shen of Magical Power, which contains magical rituals to ensure the help of nature. 4) The Vehicle of the Shen of Existence. This deals mainly with the three hundred and sixty funeral rites and propitiatory consecrations. 5) The Vehicle of Virtuous Lay Practitioners specifies the moral and ethical rules for lay practitioners. 6) The Vehicle of Ascetic Sages formulates strict ascetic and disciplinary rules for ordained monks. 7) The Vehicle of White A deals with the tantric practice of transformation into a yidam and practices concerning the mandala. 8) The Vehicle of the Primordial Shen deals with esoteric tantric practices. 9) The Supreme Vehicle describes the absolute basis of enlightenment and illusion, the path—the mind dwelling in its primordial natural state—and the fruit—enlightenment and supreme achievements—. This is the Dzogchen teaching.

Unique Truth See Dzogchen.

Yidam (Tib., yid dam; Sans., [ishta-]devata). The yidam is a tutelary or meditative deity that embodies an aspect of the enlightened mind. There are four categories of yidams: pacifying, increasing, powerful, and wrathful. Yidams manifest in these different forms to overcome specific negative forces.

Yogi (Tib.: nel-jor pa, rnal "byor pa; Sans.: yogin). A practitioner of meditative yogas, such as dream yoga and sleep yoga.

Yogini (Tib.: nel-jor ma, [rnal byor ma]; Sans.: yogini). A practitioner of meditative yogas.

Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Principal master of the Bön Tradition and root master of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. He attained the degree of geshe at age 27, at Menri Monastery in Tibet. He has published several books: The Nine Paths of Bön, [Bonpo Dzogchen Teachings], and Drops of the Heart of Dharmakaya

(Commentaries on the book by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen), among others. He currently resides at the Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal, founded by him. He gives teachings in France, where he founded the Shenten Dargye Ling Institute, as well as in Germany and other European countries.

Yungdrung Bön It is the spiritual path to enlightenment. It contains all the teachings of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab.

Yungdrung (Tib.) [g.yung-drung] Swastika. It symbolizes the Dharma of the Eternal Bön, indestructible and immutable.

Zhang Zhung The country where the teachings of Yungdrung Bön originated and developed. Until the 6th century AD, it was a country independent of Tibet. Its conquest was completed around 640 AD, during the reign of Emperor Srongtsen Gampo, although the occupation occurred during the reign of Emperor Trisong Detsen (642-797). In its time, Zhang Zhung comprised the lands of Western Tibet and parts of the northern Tibetan plateau. Its capital was Khyunglung Ngulkhar ("The Silver Palace of the Garuda Valley"), located west of Mount Kailash. The last king of Zhang Zhung was Ligmincha (Ligmirya), murdered by Trisong Detsen.

Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud (Tib.: [Zhang zhung snyan rgyud)). One of the most important cycles of Dzogchen teachings in Bön. This series of teachings was systematized by Master Gyerpung Nanghzer Lodpo in the 7th century. It belongs to the series of upadesha teachings (see upadesha).

Zhiné (Tib.: [zhi gnas]; Sans.: shamatba). Dwelling in calm or tranquility. The practice of dwelling in calm uses focus on external or internal objects to develop concentration and mental stability. Dwelling in calm is a fundamental practice, the basis for the development of all other elevated meditative practices.

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